

# 일인군단

## 一人軍團

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# **One Man Army**

**-일인군단 -**

**- Part 1 -**

**-Author-**

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**[ Chamber's Cleanup Service ]**

## - STORY -

Sang Hyuk, a man nearing his 40's, was contacted by SKY Telecom to help its team, SKY, become the best in a period of 3 years. If SKY's team members fail, they will be disbanded. After succeeding the contract in time, he was betrayed by the company that gave him everything.

Somehow, he wakes up years in the past as an 18 year old man - a year before the release of Eternal Light (EL).

Armed with knowledge of events that are yet to come, he embarks on a journey that no one has dared to tread before. His desire for revenge drives him to take this path.

# Chapter 1

## The Greatest moment?

“Congratulations. With this victory, the final victor of the United Grand Slam is now Team SKY. Everyone is saying that you, the director, is the greatest contributor to this achievement. What do you think about this?”

Lee Sanghyuk rejected the majority of interviews that flooded him after the victory, but he couldn't reject the one from LGN(Live Game Net), who broadcasted most of Team SKY's plays live.

“The victory is all thanks to the players and the coaches. I'm merely someone that just advised them in trivial matters.”

A humble answer. However, this was just for the interview. Sanghyuk himself knew that he was the one who practically lead Team SKY to victory.

The 'Heavenly Dragon Card Deck', used by the 'Crash' Choi Sangryul, the ace of Team SKY, and known to be the strongest man of EL(Eternal Life), was also created and completed by him.

He received full support from SKY Telecom to create the greatest player known as Choi Sangryul, realizing the theoretically strongest class, the 'Card Master'. The one who received the benefits of the class was naturally Choi Sangryul.

There were many other things that were completed through his hands as well. In fact, Team SKY was practically created and raised to this point by Sanghyuk's efforts alone until now.

In the first place, SKY Telecom had almost disbanded and rebuilt their team, since their team had placed last in 'EL Master League' for three years straight. When Sanghyuk caused an online uproar, they approached him, saying that they will support him with their full power in order to transform Team SKY into the greatest team in 3 years and Sanghyuk had indeed fulfilled his promise and created the perfect Team SKY within 3 years. Of course, many things happened midway, but Sanghyuk kept his part of the promise.

“You’re being too humble. The fans already know.”

“I only said the truth.”

Sanghyuk was not the hot-blooded youth in his 20s, but was in his 30s. Not only that, he would be a middle-aged man in his 40s in just 4 years, so he didn’t like flashy interviews like the young directors out there.

Naturally, the interviewer didn’t like such a style. Perhaps due to that, the reporter created a surprise question on the spot.

“Then can you confirm this as well? Recently, there is a rumor that Team SKY will bid farewell to the director in several online forums. Is this true?”

“They’re baseless rumors.”

Sanghyuk kept it short. In the first place, this wasn’t a question that was on the script, so there was no need for him to speak for long. However, what he was thinking was completely contrasting to what he had said.

‘It’s true. It’s really annoying... but it’s true.’

In fact, he had actually been notified of the dissolution of the contract. However, this was a news that would be announced in 3 months, so saying it now may cause legal issues.

The reporter made a slightly dissatisfied expression at Sanghyuk’s disinterested response and continued to the interview. Normally, others would at least try to give a funny answer, but Sanghyuk only repeated his stiff expression and answer as if to tell the reporter why he was called the ‘Ice Man’.

In the end, the interview ended without any twists.

The reporter, who was frustrated that she couldn’t get any good content out of this interview despite knowing, threw a final question that wasn’t in the script.

“Is this the greatest moment that director Sanghyuk has dreamed of?”

Sanghyuk replayed the question in his mind.

The greatest moment... Thinking about the meaning of that, and his own reality, he smiled slightly and opened his mouth to speak.

“Of course. Right now is my greatest moment.”

This was also a lie.

This moment could never be the greatest moment.

Although he reached this place by crawling up from the depths of despair... the ‘greatest moment’ he wanted wasn’t something like this.

The interview had ended, but Sanghyuk sat still for quite a while, thinking about the last question that the reporter had asked him.

“The greatest moment I really wanted... It will probably never come true... So, then. This is the realistic limit I can reach, I guess?”

Sanghyuk made a bitter smile and shook his head.

What was more frustrating was that the realistic limit he had just reached was about to be taken away from him.

Although it’s true that it was his fault for not checking the contract properly, this was going too far. Everything was practically achieved by his efforts alone, but they were forcing him to give up everything.

It was true that there was a clash of opinion between him and the SKY Telecom side, never did he imagine that they would strike him on the back of his head like this.

“Haa... I’m tired.”

He sighed and muttered with a vain expression.

He had mostly lived a life where he was deprived of. And now, he was about to be deprived of something again, so it was no wonder that he felt everything was useless.

“Just where did it go all wrong?”

Sanghyuk wanted to return everything to the start. If he really could do that, he

wanted to live a life that takes from others instead of being deprived of. However, as always, this was all his delusion.

‘If I could be reborn, no, if I could go back to that time...’

He thought such things tens and hundreds of times, each day.

However, this wasn’t something that would be granted no matter how dearly he wished for it to happen. He knew this very well, but he could only think like that because he had so many regrets in his life.

His earnest wishes piled on and on.

Again, and again.

## Chapter 2

### Return (1)

It was an ordinary day like any other. Although he did gain victory in an important competition a few days back, nothing much had changed.

He only came back home after the interview and fell asleep after drinking a lot.

But opening his eyes, everything had changed.

He couldn't believe his eyes and lay there for quite a while. After barely coming to himself, Sanghyuk first looked for a mirror and looked the reflection.

"N, no way..."

When he checked his own figure in the mirror, he knew that this absurd change was not a lie.

Inside the mirror was not a veteran director that put in his team to the highest place, but the young, 18 year-old Sanghyuk that was living in an orphanage.

'This doesn't make sense no matter how I think about it.'

This wasn't something like a dream. No matter how many times he checked, this was all vivid reality. No one would think that they would *actually* return just because they dearly wanted to, right?

Sanghyuk was the same. That was just his own delusion. But now, that delusion had become real. Naturally, he was in a very confused state.

"Fuu, calm down first, and let's check what situation I'm in."

He woke up during the night and still couldn't adapt to the situation after 5 hours. However, he couldn't stay like this forever.

He was a very cool-headed man, to the point that he was nicknamed the 'Ice Man' in



his past life. So he started to look around him and grasp his current situation while calming his heart down.

‘One thing is for sure. Either I came back to the past, or I had a very long and vivid dream about the future.’

They were both absurd hypotheses, but he could only come up with such things in his current situation.

‘The more likely scenario is that I came back to the past, right? Whatever happened, the important thing is that the future may proceed as I know it. If it’s like that, then I was just given the chance to live again as I wanted.’

It was very confusing, but he felt strange after his thoughts travelled there.

‘Was I so desperate that God gave me another chance?’

No matter how he thought about it, this kind of supernatural phenomenon couldn’t be explained through normal means. That was why he, as an atheist, brought in God to make himself accept.

“If you can’t avoid it, then enjoy it.”

Muttering his life’s motto, Sanghyuk looked at the mirror. This motto was something he saw when he was at the deepest pits of his life. Of course, this had become something of the future right now, but in any case, Sanghyuk was a 36 year-old man with an 18 year-old body so his thoughts were very different from his peers.

Something unbelievable had happened, but he couldn’t stay still just because he couldn’t believe it. Since the extremes of illogic, going back in time, had happened, he could only accept everything as it is now.

It took a few days for Sanghyuk to admit everything and accept reality as it is. He could confirm that this wasn’t something like a dream through meeting others he could barely remember as well as classmates, and he was convinced that he came back to the past.

Honestly, it wasn’t easy to accept such an absurd situation, but this was the 36 year-old Sanghyuk and not the 18 year-old, so he could come to a decision quickly.

When he accepted everything, he started seeing his surroundings. First, Sanghyuk knew that this was the year 2026, in other words, when he was 18 years old (2nd year of high school). The date written on the 'old' phone he had was exactly December 22nd, 2026.

'The event that changed my life before the winter holidays of 3rd year will happen in exactly 11 months.'

After the event that made his life fall to the depths of the abyss that happens in just 11 months, Sanghyuk had to roll around in those pits for 5 more years.

It was slightly strange to remember the future as though reminiscing the past, but in any case, that would happen if the future went as he knew it.

Of course, Sanghyuk did not plan to make the same mistake again.

'There isn't much time as I think. If I want to live this newly-gained life without regrets... I need to change many things.'

The orphanage would kick him out if he didn't go to university at 19 years old. Sanghyuk could stay in the orphanage until February of 2028.

Sanghyuk naturally didn't have the grades to go to university and had to look for another option, and as a result, he could only make such a choice in his past life.

The outcome was the worst possible one, but at the time, he thought that that was for the best.

'I can't put my trust in the crappy amount of resettlement support fund. There's no way those rotten bastards would give proper resettlement funds anyway when they sold us out to those trash. I definitely need to look for a way I could live by myself.'

Since he already had an experience crawling to the top from the abyss with his bare hands, this didn't feel like much to him.

The most important fact right now... was that Sanghyuk was completely healthy.

"With the talent I have, I can achieve the things I really wanted!"

His talent that still wasn't taken away by those trash – this still remained with him,

and if he had that, he had the confidence in doing everything.

Actually, he had crawled back up from the bottom even after losing that talent. That was why he was currently nodding his head with a confident expression right now.



He couldn't remember a lot of the things, but there wasn't much inconveniences despite that. His personality was originally a quiet one, and he also had the matured wits of a 36 year-old, so he could blend in without popping out.

Like that, he adapted to reality in just a few days, then he started planning for the future.

He couldn't be sure about the information of the future was 100% accurate, but from the past few days, the future he knew and the flow of reality was extremely similar.

In such a situation, it would be foolish to not use the information he knew.

"The first thing I need... is probably money, right?"

Since he was going to be kicked out into society in just one year, money could only be very important to him.

"Then what can I do to earn money?"

Realistically, he was only in his 2nd year of high school right now, so he didn't have many choices through which he could earn money. The only work he could do was slaving away at his part-time job with below minimum wage.

"I can't earn enough money through a part time job. Then... I guess it comes down to earning money through DN(Dream Network)?"

DN was a kind of huge world that was created in 2020 when VR(Virtual Reality) technology had developed rapidly.

DN had developed rapidly like the internet of the past, and by now, it had absorbed most of the fields where internet was dominant; it was accepted as the world within a world.

‘There’s still 1 year to DN’s revolution, EL(Eternal Life)’s release, isn’t there?’

EL, released in March 2028, became the greatest virtual reality game in the world in mere 4 months after its release. And it did not give its position away for over 15 years.

“I need to make the foundation through which I can undividedly focus on EL before it gets released.”

Since the only thing he had was his body, there wasn’t much he could do even though he had returned to the past.

Sanghyuk knew exactly what kind of special talent he had. That was why he was planning to use that talent to become the best of the best.

“What was the most popular VR game right now?”

Ever since he had come to the past, he was making notes on the important pieces of information he knew on his phone.

Looking through the notes, Sanghyuk could find ‘Sword and Magic’, and remembered that this was popular hit before EL was released.

“Yes. This one was popular for a while.”

Although not much, he did play Sword and Magic for around 6 months.

‘Although I played it against my will, but at least that will help me right now.’

Sanghyuk would subconsciously become angry every time he thought of that time, but anyhow, that experience could help him right now.

‘I guess it’s fortunate that capsule VR devices hasn’t been released yet.’

Capsule VR devices were things that became popular along with EL. To be exact, capsule VR devices were required to enjoy EL properly.

Sword and Magic was a game that could be enjoyed with the headset VR devices, and these headset VR devices could be bought for 400 thousand won (400 USD) if he bought it second hand.

“The problem is that I don’t have that 400 thousand won right now.”

VR devices were a must in order to earn money through DN. This meant that the money required to buy a VR device should be earned through part-time jobs.



Working part-time as an 18 year-old with a 36 year-old mind was a lot tougher than he thought. The job he went with was the convenience store that he found easy and done a lot in the past but... he could see several injustices that he might have overlooked when he was young, but that wasn’t what made him tired, it was that he had to overlook them as well.

This wasn’t something that would be changed just because he stepped up, and his priority right now was to gather minimum funds, so he endured it through.

Like that, he made 600 thousand won (600 USD) through one month at the convenience store, and bought a second hand VR headset that he could use.

Since he had expert knowledge regarding VR devices, no scammers could scam him through the second hand trade websites.

What was unfortunate was that it was impossible to use this VR headset at the orphanage. Due to various reasons, he could only keep quiet about the fact that he bought a VR device.

Sanghyuk was in a position where he could only play games in secret, so he talked to the owner of an old VR room near the orphanage and paid 100 thousand won (100 USD) to hog one corner of the VR room for 2 months.

This might sound slightly expensive considering a regular membership fee was 150 thousand won (150 USD) per month, but right now, it was more important to start the game as soon as possible. *(T/N: I’m guessing regular membership comes with a headset rent as well then.)*

Since he was already thinking of dropping out of school, he was planning to attend just enough that the school won’t call the orphanage. Since the high school was filled with problem children, it wouldn’t matter even if he showed up once every few days.

Like that, Sanghyuk started off his first step in his second opportunity in an old VR room.

The nausea unique to accessing the Dream Network through a VR device made a lot of people feel unpleasant. This was improved a lot when technology developed and VR capsules made their debut, but they weren't completely gone.

However, Sanghyuk didn't feel this unique nauseous feeling at all. This wasn't something that happened because he was used to VR in his past life or anything.

The talent he was born with – thanks to that talent, he could feel no nausea at all.

With the development of virtual reality technology and the appearance of a virtual world known as the Dream Network, a new kind of talent that wasn't discovered until now received the spotlight.

It was a quality that not only measured people's reactions in virtual reality, but also what people saw in virtual reality as well.

In real life, these people usually became professional sports players, but in the Dream Network, they naturally became professional gamers.

In any case, this quality was called the VRA(Virtual Reality Ability) and at first, this was considered something abstract, but after enough research from many researchers in the field, the exact measuring method had appeared.

VRA measurement was naturally done within the Dream Network, and the absolute majority of the world possessed VRAs of around 100~150.

The ones that didn't adapt to virtual reality had around 70~100, and vice versa, the ones with great adaptability possessed VRAs around 200.

The special ones referred to as VR pro gamers had an average VRA of a whopping 250.

A VRA of 250 was equivalent to the motor abilities of professional sports players in real life.

Naturally, Sanghyuk also had a VRA that was far from normal. In his memory, the highest VRA he recorded in his past life was a whopping 350.

A value that vastly exceeds even the professional gamers... This wasn't confirmed, but he also heard that his VRA was a world record.

Of course, he was crippled in exactly 4 years after he recorded that, and was evaluated to have a VRA of 40, but at least right now, Sanghyuk possessed a tremendous level of VRA.

"In this half a year... I'll earn enough money to become independent from the orphanage!"

Muttered Sanghyuk in resolve before accessing the Dream Network. He was thinking of earning money through Sword and Magic and become independent.

It wasn't easy to earn money through Sword and Magic when it was nearly at the end of its life. However, Sanghyuk believed that he would be able to achieve what he wanted to as long as he had his special talent and a few pieces of information.

## Chapter 3

### Return (2)

After browsing through his memories, Sanghyuk came to a conclusion that he remembered the Sword and Magic of 2027 too well. This couldn't be helped since Sword and Magic committed a huge mistake and showed signs of giving its position as the top game to Eternal Life.

Although this hadn't happened yet, Sword and Magic would undergo its 4th large-scale patch in September of 2027... and this made Sword and Magic into Shit and Magic.

Of course, a few other mistakes were committed on top of this large-scale patch, and as the so-called revolution of VR, EL appeared, it completely collapsed.

However, this hadn't happened yet, and Sword and Magic was indeed the greatest game in existence right now.

The point Sanghyuk paid his attention to was one of the changes that occurred in Sword and Magic's 4th large-scale patch that made Sword and Magic into Shit and Magic.

This change was so sudden that the game was insanely 'shit on' by the users. But for Sanghyuk, this was a very good piece of information.

Sanghyuk, who had his VR headset on, called the Dream Network's interface very proficiently. In fact, many first time Dream Network users couldn't do this very well.

The white space he was currently standing in right now was something called the D-room. To simplify Dream Network, it was a large intranet that connected the existing virtual reality services together.

Normal users could access various virtual reality services in personal D-rooms like the one Sanghyuk was in right now. Naturally, Sword and Magic could also be accessed from here as well.



Of course, Sword and Magic required a pretty large fee of 70 thousand won (70 USD) per month to play. There were many virtual reality services that were free, but they also had ads or other real-money shops, so it was instead natural to use paid services in Dream Network.

And honestly, the monthly fee did look quite expensive in his current situation, but this was nothing compared to the 120 thousand won monthly fee (120 USD) required to play EL.

Sanghyuk had bought a gift card to charge his account beforehand, so he paid the fee right away and entered the game.

Games in Dream Network, especially RPGs like Sword and Magic had long and complex tutorials. However, such tutorials were meaningless to him.

He lightly skipped the tutorial and entered Sword and Magic right away.

At its base, Sword and Magic was a well-made game.

That was the reason it maintained its top position in Dream Network for 3 years now. However, that made it just as difficult for new users to catch up to the old.

Naturally, Sanghyuk wasn't planning to catch up to the original players by leveling up.

In the first place, his original objective in playing Sword and Magic was to earn cash. That was why Sanghyuk chose not only the starting spot but his jobs as well and not through a random generator.

Ironically, this was done with his experience he got in the 'workshop' where he slaved away for 5 years in his past life.

Having selected archer as his job since they had the highest basic strength and agility, and 'Penwood', a middle-grade city within a mountain range that people didn't select a lot as the starting point, Sanghyuk made a bitter smile as soon as he entered.

"At that time, all of this felt like hell... but now that I see it, the scenery is quite decent."

All memories of Sword and Magic in his past life weren't good at all. This was natural since, at that time, Sanghyuk wasn't playing this game for fun, but was forced to.

To talk about this, an event that happens in around 10 months later in the orphanage had to be mentioned.

In his past life, when Sanghyuk was in his 3rd year of high school, some strangers came to the orphanage. In Sanghyuk's memory, they had a really long title on their business cards, "Supporter for the Independency of Children Requiring Protection".

Of course, it was later that he realized how empty their business card was, but at that time, they were quite popular with the children who had bleak futures.

Saying they would help the independency of the children who needs to be protected, they underwent one test against the children who would have to leave the orphanage in one year.

That was the VRA measuring test. They put out a contract to the children saying that there was a splendid working place for them where they could earn money through enjoying games.

Naturally, that contract was an absurd slave contract, but at that time, the young Sanghyuk was tempted by their sugarcoating and signed the contract without thinking much about it.

The related people in the orphanage had also recommended him and the others to sign so he didn't doubt much about it.

Thinking about it now, they were all bad adults, but it wasn't actually something frustrating for him considering that he had met more bad people than good in his past life.

Naturally, Sanghyuk scored an absurdly high number and surprised the 'Supporters of Independence of Children Requiring Protection', no, those trash that operated the DN workshop.

At that time, Sanghyuk got overly excited when other people praised him for the test and signed the contract they held out.

And per their offer, he did not finish the three years of high school and moved his residence to their workshop under the pretense of 'employment'.

There was nothing to talk about after that matter.

From then, Sanghyuk had slaved away for exactly five years without even being able to go outside properly. If the police hadn't attacked the workshop after being informed that children were being treated like abducted slaves in there, he might have had to spend even longer in that life.

He was dragged at 19 years old, and was freed at 24. Since Sanghyuk's talent was very high, the workshop guys made him work for even longer than the others. And eventually, an accident happened.

It could be said that his life became easier because of that accident, but as a result, Sanghyuk had to lose his shining talent.

In any case, Sanghyuk had to restart everything at the age of 24 because of his hellish experience.

The 5 years he spent in the workshop was a nightmarish memory in his mind, but he at least remembered the things he had learned there.

Since he had learned them in order to survive, he couldn't forget it even if he wanted to.

"The herb I dug like mad in order to avoid beatings and get food... now I have to dig them in order to earn money?"

What Sanghyuk had to do in the first 6 months in Sword and Magic was to dig herbs. Different workshops had different ways to earn money, and the workshop that took Sanghyuk knew all of the respawn points for Sword and Magic's herbs.

With that information, Sanghyuk went around digging those out like mad.

The areas where the herbs spawned were mostly areas where players over level 30 and 2nd jobs could walk around, but Sanghyuk went around those fields after hitting level 10.

This was only possible with his special talent.

Sword and Magic, like any other RPGs, had fast initial level up speed. Sanghyuk became level 10 with just 5 hours of playtime. Unlike the other users who were busy adapting to their movements in virtual reality, Sanghyuk proficiently hunted monsters.

Starting from level 10, the time required to level up would rise quite rapidly, so Sanghyuk didn't plan to level up anymore. Having reached the bare minimum level required to collect the herbs, Sanghyuk moved to the Penwood Cliffs, which was called one of the spectacles of Sword and Magic.

Penwood Cliffs was currently an area that even users over level 70, the top rankers, couldn't walk around easily. It wasn't an area that spawned monsters. To be exact, the terrain was so rough that one mistake would lead to falling to death, so not even monsters could live here.

In fact, a few high-level users came here and showed off with faith in their avatar's ability and fell to their deaths quite a few times.

Since this was the case with users over level 70, this was considered a forbidden zone for the low-level users.

The reason Penwood was one of the least popular starting spots in the game was also that there were so many similar cliffs around. But Sanghyuk had headed for those cliffs even though he was just level 10.

Normally, this would be considered insane, but this wasn't anything insane, at least not to Sanghyuk. He even had experience roaming these cliffs when he was level 10 in his past life.

"I can definitely remember things more clearly now that I'm here."

Swoosh, tap!

Leaping over to the other side of the cliff lightly, Sanghyuk tightly held onto a protrusion in the cliff with his fingers.

He got onto the cliff so easily as though he had put some adhesive on the tip of his fingers. Normal users would have fallen to their deaths already, but he was climbing the cliff very proficiently.

The reason this was possible because he had an extremely sensitive control that could transfer all of his strength into the tip of his fingers, unlike other users.

This was the grandeur of 350 VRA.

“There, and there too...”

As he had expected, he started remembering the respawn points of the herbs that he couldn't remember before. This place was somewhere Sanghyuk had pioneered himself later in the workshop and not the points that the workshop had given him, so there was no risk of his spots being stolen.

Of course, the terrain was just as dangerous, but the dangerous terrain wasn't a problem for Sanghyuk. Even if he made a mistake and fell to his death, he had almost nothing to lose.

Since he was 'below or equal to' level 10, he wouldn't receive any level downs nor would he drop any items. Since he had nothing to lose, Sanghyuk could be more daring in his climb.

Then why did the other users under level 10 not come here? That was simple as well. They couldn't even move a few steps in this area before falling.

In the first place, a VRA of 350 wasn't a common value.

Even if someone else did have such a value, there was no way such a person would be digging herbs in this place.

In other words, what Sanghyuk was doing right now could only be done by him.

Sanghyuk climbed the cliff with his bare hands and moved around nimbly. Since the herbs he was looking for were very rare, he should be able to earn quite some gold once he sold them.

Of course, turning them into cash would earn him much more than working part time at a convenience store. However, Sanghyuk wasn't aiming for such a low amount of cash when he was digging these herbs.

He was planning to do one thing with the gold he would get after selling these herbs.

He was planning to strike it big through this.

A jackpot that no one else could hit.

There was a jackpot that only he, who knew the future, could strike.

When he thought up of Sword and Magic, this was the first thing he remembered, and digging herbs came later, when he was looking for a way to gather enough money for this.

A single change that occurs in the 4th large-scale patch that happens in 8 months. Sanghyuk knew of this change, so he knew exactly what he had to do right now.

He climbed up a high cliff and scavenged 2 sprouts of Nineleaf Redgrass, which would go for 100 gold each.

“Oh yeah... this feeling... is what I wanted.”

Sanghyuk knew very well what kind of dangerous things he was doing right now. However, the stuffy feeling that he got when he lost his talent and became unable to do what he wanted made him almost crazy.

“However, this is child’s play compared to EL.”

Sword and Magic was indeed a very well-made game, but it was incomparable to Eternal Life(EL).

EL was literally the last boss of virtual reality games.

‘8 months until the patch... I’ll gather as many of *that* as possible!’

Taking a short rest while looking at the scenery, Sanghyuk put the Nineleaf Redgrass into his bag and started climbing again.

If the past Sanghyuk climbed cliffs like crazy against his will, the current Sanghyuk climbed cliffs like crazy on his own will.

He had grasped a new opportunity. His life would begin for real now.

# Chapter 4

## Overcoming Despair (1)

Sanghyuk's herb gathering gradually sped up and the result was more gold than he had planned to earn. However, there wasn't actually any gold remaining in Sanghyuk's hand.

Sanghyuk bought items from the auction as soon as he got some gold... and the item that he was stocking up for months was called the 'Sealed Crystals'.

At the current point in time, Sealed Crystals were referred to as trash gacha.

This couldn't be helped since the items within the Sealed Crystals were mostly items that weren't used by users or other miscellaneous items.

Sometimes, an enhancement stone would pop out, but not only was the probability low, enhancement stones just with no descriptive word attached to it wasn't that expensive either, so no one tried to acquire enhancement stones by cracking Sealed Crystals.

Since this was the case, Sealed Crystals overflowed within the auction. The drop rate of the Sealed Crystals themselves weren't that high so the rate of acquisition wasn't high, but the problem was that there was no consumption at all.

Sanghyuk bought as many Sealed Crystals as possible while controlling the market price. There were many users who specialized in buying items off the auction and re-selling them again, so it wouldn't do him good to make anyone notice that he was buying up those Sealed Crystals.

The auction merchants had ridiculously high wits so once it was found out that he was stocking up, the prices of Sealed Crystals may rise exponentially.

Sanghyuk was gathering the Sealed Crystals while being careful not to get found out as much as possible.

The reason he was gathering these Sealed Crystals... was because of one of the big

changes that occurred in the 4th large-scale patch.

The upgrade of Sealed Crystals that made all users shocked and complain to the developers... in fact, the contents were simple, but the ripples from just one line of that patch was enormous.

‘In the future, you may acquire blessed enhancement stones in the Sealed Crystals at a low probability.’

Although not exact, it was something along those lines. Sanghyuk played Sword and Magic after the 4th patch, so he had only heard them as myths in the community forums, so he didn’t know the exact line.

However, what was important was that blessed enhancement stones would appear from the Sealed Crystals after the patch. Since the Sealed Crystals acquired before the patch would have the same probability, the users complained even more, saying that the developers didn’t know about games at all.

Blessed enhancement stones were in a completely different league to normal enhancement stones. Blessed enhancement stones were extremely expensive, to the point that they were mostly traded using real cash.

For comparison, normal enhancement stones were worth around 20 thousand won (20 USD) at best, and blessed enhancement stones went for over 2 million (2,000 USD). They weren’t something to be compared.

Also, although the patch updates said ‘low probability’, the users who immediately cracked open the Sealed Crystals after the patch got around 1 blessed enhancement stone for every 10 Sealed Crystals they opened, and in just one hour, the developers patched so that only 1 will appear every 100 Crystals. This was quite a trustworthy information as well.

Of course, Sanghyuk hadn’t experienced this for himself so he didn’t know the truth about it. However, even if 1 appeared in every 100 Sealed Crystals, it would profit him to gather those Sealed Crystals right now.

Right now, the real cash value of the Sealed Crystals was around 5 thousand won (5 USD).

So, even if he bought 100 and acquired 1 blessed enhancement stone, he could only



profit.

This was why it would be a huge jackpot if the probability was 1 in 10 like the rumors were true, and still a plenty of a jackpot even if it wasn't.

Sanghyuk's objective was to acquire more than 3,000 of these crystals. Of course, this wouldn't be easy, but he dug the herbs on the cliffs like mad precisely for that purpose.



Time flowed quickly and the year had passed and now it was into autumn.

September 11th, 2027.

The 4th large-scale patch of Sword and Magic, 'Boloyanne's Descent' had finally arrived.

Sanghyuk had already prepared to log in as soon as the patch was over.

The number of Sealed Crystals he had stocked up during the past 7 months was a whopping 3,116.

If he really could acquire one blessed enhancement stone for every 10 crystals, then he would be able to acquire more than 300 with just a simple calculation, and they would cost around a whopping 600 million won (600 thousand USD).

Of course, he didn't feel that there would be so many, but he was expecting at least in the tens of millions.

Sanghyuk logged into the game as soon as the patch ended. Since he had logged out in front of the warehouse before the patch, he could start cracking the crystals immediately.

After he opened around a few hundred, he realized that the rumors weren't 100% true. However, they weren't completely wrong either

He could get around one blessed enhancement stone in every 40 Sealed Crystals, when it was supposed to be 1 in 100. It seemed that It seems like people had slightly exaggerated a little when they said 1 in 10.

In any case, Sanghyuk opened all 3,116 Sealed Crystals in his possession in a flash, and he could acquire 74 blessed enhancement stones.

Although the difference was slightly big, 74 blessed enhancement stones would get him 150 million won, and around 130 million won after fees. This was an enormous sum for a high schooler who had no technical prowess to speak of.

In the first place, Sanghyuk was planning to earn enough money to become independent from the orphanage, so he could stay satisfied with this much.

“I was going to end it here anyway so let’s finish up.”

Sanghyuk did not grab onto Sword and Magic anymore. Right now, it was better to prepare to meet EL.

In 6 months, his long-awaited EL would officially start service. If he kept playing Sword and Magic for these 6 months, he might be able to get some monetary profit, but Sanghyuk thought that he had to prioritize making a body and mind that could focus on EL.

Since he had set his mind, he cleaned up everything in just a few days. Once he sold everything he could, there was exactly 137 million 400 thousand won in his bank.

This was an enormous sum for someone who had just 6 digits in his bank account just a while back. If Sanghyuk was an ordinary high school boy, then he might have splurged his money in excitement.

However, he was no ordinary high school boy, so he acted as calm and indifferent as always. This wasn’t a good time to act showy.

‘I don’t remember the exact date, but it was definitely at the end of November. So let’s live like I did until then.’

The event he was waiting for was the visit of the trash that put him through the depths of despair.



Having finished Sword and Magic completely, he even sold the VR headset he had as well. Since VR capsules would be released along with the release of EL, it was better

to sell the old devices before their prices decreased.

Now that he had cleaned up everything, Sanghyuk suddenly started to learn meditation. In a paper he read when he was a director of Team SKY, there was a line that said that VRA values were higher for people who had toned their mind through periodic meditation.

In other words, meditation would help in raising the VRA value. Of course, Sanghyuk's VRA value was nearing the extreme limits, but he did not let his guard down despite that.

Since he had experienced the fact that VRA value may drop due to various reasons with his body, he could only put a lot of mind into managing his VRA value.

Not only did Sanghyuk learn meditation, but he also started Kendo. Of course, he wasn't learning Kendo in order to use the techniques used in Kendo in games as well.

Learning Kendo in real life might sound like it would help in virtual reality games, but reality and virtual reality wasn't linked so simply.

A low VRA may result in not being able to swing a sword properly in virtual reality even when having learned Kendo in real life. In reverse, people with no athletic talent in real life may show exceptional motor abilities in virtual reality if they had a high VRA value.

VRA wasn't called the new type of talent for nothing.

The reason Sanghyuk was learning Kendo was not because he wanted to learn how to wield the sword, but learning to calm the state of mind and keep his body healthy.

In his directing days, he had seen countless professional gamers who were obsessed with games to the point that their body degraded so much that they couldn't even access virtual reality anymore.

This was why he always said that professional gamers had to have a healthy body. Sanghyuk was training his body calmly through Kendo for such a reason.

Time flowed quickly yet again.

And... November 27th 2027.

The two devilish men that he would never be able to forget appeared in front of him again.

‘Park Sangchul, Kim Daeshik.’

Sanghyuk even remembered their names clearly.

He gritted his teeth subconsciously the moment he saw those two. However, he could only endure it for now.

‘I’ll endure for now, but... I will never stay still.’

He had the urge to call the police and immediately hand them over, but the problem was that they periodically moved residences and operated their workshops there, so even if he did want to call the police, he couldn’t since he didn’t know where their workshop was.

And considering how they easily escaped the police with the power of money in his past life, calling the police definitely wasn’t a good idea.

‘I will... thoroughly trample on you after I take the most important things you have... in my own way. That will be my revenge.’

This was why Sanghyuk was planning to enact justice on them in his own way and without the help from the police. It would take some time for that to happen, but he could endure that much.

Park Sangchul and Kim Daeshik tempted the children with their fluent speaking skills. Then, they immediately started the VRA test... and unfortunately the others had desperately tried to get a higher VRA like it was in his past life.

Sanghyuk really had the urge to reveal the true identities of the two men and stop the others from following them. However, he couldn’t do that. Even the orphanage management personnel were in cahoots with these men so riling them up may put him in a worse situation.

Decisively, the probability of the others believing in him was very low. Sanghyuk was someone who originally lived in Uijeongbu orphanage and was transferred to here after that one closed down just one year ago, so he had no close friends here.

In the first place, Sanghyuk's personality wasn't a friendly one, so he became more and more isolated, and at this point in time, there was nothing he could do to stop them.

Sanghyuk closed his eyes and calmed his mind with meditation. And when it was his turn, he put the VR headset on his head.

## Chapter 5

### Overcoming Despair (2)

VRA couldn't be manipulated. No, to be exact, it couldn't be manipulated *upwards*. However, the reverse was possible. In cases like Sanghyuk, where the user had plenty of experience in virtual reality, they could lower their VRA measurements easily.

Of course, it was possible to check whether if someone was intentionally doing worse in the VRA measurement test. However, expert knowledge was required to do that.

Obviously, Park Sangchul and Kim Daeshik had no idea that Sanghyuk would intentionally lower his VRA so they wouldn't be suspicious of him. Even if they were, they didn't have any way to find if that was true or not.

"75... It's one of the worst."

Park Sangchul creased his expression after looking at the number on the monitor. They only took children with VRAs over 150. Taking children with lower values wouldn't be efficient.

VRA of 75 was trash that they definitely had to throw away.

"Dammit, there are so many empty draws today."

Grumbled Kim DaeShik in a small voice, so that the children couldn't hear him. He stood up and took the VR headset off Sanghyuk's head after Park Sangchul ended the VRA test program.

Even though he had a creased expression and was grumbling until just now, he was smiling brightly in front of Sanghyuk.

'I didn't know at that time; the face of the devil was hiding behind that smile...'

With this, the test was over, and Sanghyuk would obviously be disqualified.

He had overcome despair... Like he wanted, he was now in a completely different orbit

from his past life.



After Park Sangchul and Kim Daeshik officially employed some of the children and left, Sanghyuk also prepared to leave the orphanage. In fact, he had already acquired a small officetel in Ilsan, so all he had to do was to leave the orphanage.

Since he had no attachments to the orphanage at all, he didn't even bother to receive the resettlement support funds after graduating high school and immediately left the orphanage. Also, he didn't know what may happen while he waited for the resettlement support funds which was unlikely that he would receive, he thought that it was a wiser choice to give it up.

In 3 months, Sanghyuk's long-awaited Eternal Life's free open beta would begin so it was more important to prepare for the initial sprint of that.

EL was the game that had the audacity to only run the open beta for one week. In his previous life, this was very controversial, but it also meant that the creator of EL, Raonsoft, had that much confidence as well.

Leaving the orphanage wasn't difficult. In any case, people like Sanghyuk who didn't plan to go to universities, had to become independent the moment they graduated high school.

With simple luggage, Sanghyuk left the orphanage and immediately headed to Ilsan. He didn't feel the need to look for a good officetel, so he had found the smallest and cheapest officetel in Janghang-dong, east Ilsan.

The important thing to him right now wasn't the officetel, but the VR capsule that would be released in two months.

Sanghyuk had already decided on what to buy. He didn't consider any bang-for-your-buck and was planning to buy the balls-to-the-wall 'Andromeda-X' made by Ilsung Electronics, which was reputed to have the best performance among the EL users in his previous life.

Not only that, he was planning to add all the optional functions and performance tweaks as well on top of the highest-end model, so he was thinking of spending at least

10 million won (10,000 USD).

A master smith does not blame his tools, but good tools would mean more exceptional results for the master smith. In that sense, Sanghyuk wasn't planning to hold back on buying the VR device.

Having moved his residence to the officetel in Ilsan, Sanghyuk continued meditating and doing Kendo while waiting for EL's release. Once EL was released, he was planning to decrease his sleep as well to focus on the game, so he had to build his stamina right now in order to charge forward like mad later.

January of 2028 had quite cold weather, but Sanghyuk jogged every morning and night on the park to build his body. He looked like a professional sports player in front of a big match. In fact, Sanghyuk also considered professional gamers as professional sports players in a broad sense of view.

That made him reiterate the importance of health to his team when he was a director.

Time flowed, and it now became February.

By February, rumors about Eternal Life started popping up. Of course, at the current point in time, EL had more bad evaluations than good.

There were too many secrets, and it was hard to receive a good reputation because the developers were from a relatively new company.

In fact, some other games were receiving attention and not EL. And due to the VR capsules that were finally released, not many people had the leisure to take an interest in EL either.

Naturally, Sanghyuk also came to a specialty store to buy a VR capsule.

Although the prices were high, since it hadn't been long since they were released, and it was possible that the highest-end models would be sold out if he didn't buy it beforehand, so he came to the store as soon as they were released.

"So you're saying you ran out of the item?"

Sanghyuk came to the nearest large VR device specialty store in Ilsan. Since the VR device, he was looking for was very rare, he couldn't get it anywhere.



“The thing is... we *do* have the item, but...”

Sanghyuk tilted his head when he saw that the store employee made a difficult expression.

“You have the item so what’s wrong?”

“We apologize. There aren’t any employees capable of installing software on that product yet. Since it requires such a complex installation process...”

“Oh...”

Having heard the answer, Sanghyuk realized that he forgot it since it was too obvious.

“There are few in our main branch but those people are busy right now... so if you apply for the installation, I think you need to wait at least one month.”

It was true. Professional-grade VR capsules couldn’t be installed by anyone. And right now, it was very probable that the experts in this field were facing against special guests.

“Then forget about the software installation, please just install the hardware.”

With VR capsules, Dream Network couldn’t be accessed at all without a proper software installation. This was especially the case with the highest-end model made for professionals that Sanghyuk wanted to have. They required an even more complex settings, so experts needed to be dispatched for the software installation along with the hardware.

“I’m very sorry, but this item cannot be used simply by installing since it is very different from VR headsets”

“I know. Damage synchro rate settings and biograph check system, and VRA integration programs. Non-experts can’t explain this fully. But... I can do that myself so please just install the device.”

“How do you...”

“I’m also someone who works in that area.”

Sanghyuk wasn't bothered to explain about everything, so he just skipped it by saying that he was an expert. Actually, he wasn't exactly an expert in that area. It was just that he had used it for such a long time that he could be considered better than the current VR capsule experts.

"Oh, that's it. That's very good. I'll prepare the item right away. As I said, the price is 14 million won (14,000USD) including tax."

No matter how expensive VR capsules were, 14 million was slightly too expensive. Since the mass-produced ones costs around a tenth of that, it was even more drastic of a comparison.

In fact, this high price actually included the expert software installation fees so it could be said that he was making a loss here, but right now, the priority was to install the VR capsule and adapt to it as fast as possible rather than thinking of those losses.

Since there was a product in the stock, the hardware installation ended quite soon. Although the most important software settings weren't done, Sanghyuk could do that himself.

Sanghyuk didn't delay anything and immediately entered the VR capsule and started tweaking the settings. Fundamentally, programs for VR machines could all be tweaked within the virtual space it created.

Once Sanghyuk entered the capsule and activated the VR machine, a white room was created in front of his eyes.

This was the D-room. Of course, it wasn't the stereotypical D-room but a half-assed one that wasn't connected to the Dream Network.

"Let's start off with the synchro rate first..."

Having entered the D-room, Sanghyuk tapped on the floor lightly. Then, screens with various complex codes appeared in front of him.

Sanghyuk had put in tremendous effort to escape the pit of despair that he fell into when he had lost everything, and what he was doing now, D-room programming, was also one of them.

Of course, in the end, this was one of his many efforts in order to challenge virtual

reality games again, but in any case, it was the truth that he was better than most VR programmers out there.

Sanghyuk proficiently started tweaking the settings. Although his memory was slightly blurry as this was quite an 'old' model, his memory came back after touching them for quite a long time.

After around 3 hours of tweaking, he could finish all settings perfectly. If there was a more familiar 7th gen capsule in front of him, he would have finished the settings within one hour, but he could only take more time since this was one of the 1st generation devices.

Having finished the settings, Sanghyuk connected his D-room to the Dream Network. To put into comparison, this was like installing the operating system and connecting to the internet in the olden days.

Since he was connected to the internet, no, to the Dream Network, he, of course, needed to check if everything worked properly. At times like these, Sanghyuk always played the 'virtual reality fighting games'.

In his view, virtual reality fighting games were the greatest warm up games. And since they were tons of fun as well, he sometimes enjoyed these virtual reality fighting games.

Although they lacked popularity compared to VRMMORPGs, virtual reality fighting games also had their own set of fans so there were quite a few popular titles.

Sanghyuk logged into the current most popular virtual fighting game, 'Fantasy Tekken4'. Actually, he played this game to relieve stress in his previous life when he was being slaved away in the workshop.

The ID Sanghyuk used back then was 'Thunderquake'. And there was something that Sanghyuk didn't know, and it was that the ID Thunderquake was feared by the rankers of Fantasy Tekken.

According to Fantasy Tekken's system, every single match counted in ranking competitions so if the highest rankers lost to users below the 1,000 ranked users; their points may receive a huge hit.

In that sense, he was a user below the 10,000s, but his win rates neared a whopping

95% and struck fear into all the rankers.

In any case, Thunderquake was quite a famous person among the Fantasy Tekken users, but the person himself didn't know that.

Of course, since this was the first time he logged into Fantasy Tekken in this life, he created a new account.

As he always did, he played around 10 matches to warm up. There are some people that think that there was no difference between reality and virtual reality, but that was a misconception.

Everything was different in virtual reality. That was why 'warming up' in virtual reality was more like 'warming up the mind' instead of the body.

In a broader sense, VRA could be considered reflex of thought processes. Of course, once you delve into the details, that wasn't the only element, but in any case, faster thought reflexes corresponded to faster and more delicate movements in virtual reality.

Having created a new account with the same name, Thunderquake, Sanghyuk lightly won all 10 matches and logged out.

'Phew, I guess I rusted a little since it's been such a long time.'

He felt quite awkward since it had been an extremely long time since he enjoyed a game in a VR capsule in his intact(?) state, but his controls would shock any ordinary person.

However, this wasn't up to his standards.

"I'll need to regain my previous senses by logging in quite frequently for a while."

Muttered Sanghyuk as he nodded his head.

Since there was still one month before EL officially launched, he was planning to raise his conditions to the max.

Since he had acquired 'freedom' that he didn't have in his previous life, Sanghyuk logged into Fantasy Tekken more frequently and gradually recovered his previous

senses. Thanks to that, the original rankers of Fantasy Tekken had to suffer.

Since he gained victory after victory, he was often referred to as the 'Thunderquake of shock and fear' among the highest ranked users once he entered the top 10,000, which was the area where he would sometimes be matched with the highest ranked users.

It was to the point that the community forums said that the final score for that day differed according to how many times the user met Thunderquake that day.

Of course, Sanghyuk didn't even create an account to such forums, so he didn't even know that there were such sayings going around the community. Since he had blocked all whispers and other in-game communication as well, there was no way for him to know any evaluations about himself.

Since he had acquired an innate distrust towards everyone around him due to the experiences in his previous life, he was planning to avoid getting mentally damaged by cutting off any means of online communication.

In any case, time still flowed.

And finally!

It became the 4th of March, 2028, the official launch of EL's open beta.

Actually, EL received quite a few expectations among the gamers-to-the-bones people, but as they released too little information about it on top of announcing the open beta suddenly, there were more negative opinions than good at the current point in time.

However, even if everyone in the world gave negative opinions about it, only one person... Sanghyuk would never think negatively about it.

He had already experienced what kind of a grand game that EL grew into so... he was waiting for the server to be opened after having prepared everything.

# Chapter 6

## Drawing the Big Picture (1)

[The recommended VRA of this game is 150. Users with VRA lower than 100 may experience difficulties in the gameplay.]

The first thing that appeared after he started Eternal Life was a warning message. In compliance with the new law that was made in 2024, all Dream Network contents had to put the recommended VRA, and the majority required VRAs over 80.

Considering how slightly higher VRA requirements were 100~120 until now, EL's recommended VRA requirement was considerably high. On top of that, non-adults below 18 years of age were limited access so the entry barrier to EL could only rise higher and higher.

However, later on, even people with low VRA played EL despite the risks. Since the game was very interesting, people couldn't help but play regardless of their VRA. Due to this reason, EL later recorded the highest simultaneous logins despite being an R-18 game.

It was just that amazing of a game, but in any case, a minimum VRA of 150 was required to play EL properly.

This was the reason why there was a considerable number of watching users who didn't play themselves and only watched the live broadcasts of professional gamers.

'EL is fun to play, but it is also quite fun to watch.'

To pick some reasons why EL was a success, it was because the game itself was quite addictive and the people watching could have a considerable amount of fun spectating as well.

'But at this point... EL was a failure of the game.'

Sanghyuk imagined that the related Raonsoft personnel would be crying right about

now. He really had the urge to just call Raonsoft and buy their stocks, but not only did he have almost no knowledge regarding stock trading, none of their financial backers that would sell them since they weren't people who were running out of money anyway, so he didn't get greedy on that part.

While he was immersed in his thoughts, it finally came down to the character creation panel.

You require a different name to live a life of eternity. Please speak your name you wish to use in Eternal Life with a clear and loud voice.

"Immortal."

Sanghyuk chose a name that might not suit EL but wanted to use for quite a while. In his previous life, he used quite a common name, "Roaring Tempest", so he wanted to use a special nickname this time.

There are 0 people who have chosen 'Immortal' as their name until now. Since it is the first registration without an identical user name, no internal codes will be attached.

EL allowed 100 identical names. However, the system would attach an internal code to those names to the people that created avatars with an already existing nickname and register their names in the system with those additional codes.

For example, if someone else made an avatar named 'Immortal' as Sanghyuk did, an internal code similar to 'second' would be attached and would become 'Second Immortal' within the system. They may look like the same 'Immortal' within the game, but the system would differentiate between the two.

When he created the name, a white light enveloped Sanghyuk's body, and at the same time, a whole different world spanned out in front of Sanghyuk.

Endless green plains that made him refreshed just by looking at it was quite a sentimental place for Sanghyuk.

'Endless Plains.'

This place was somewhere users of EL could only enter in their first login. EL was definitely not a friendly game towards to the users.

There was nothing like a game guide that other games provided so naturally, and they didn't even introduce any job classes or character control guides.

Every time the users complained about that to the developers, EL's creator Raonsoft repeated the same words.

'Eternal Life is a world that the users will need to create on their own. That is why everything needs to be discovered by the users. We will not prevent the users creating their own set of manuals and walkthroughs, but the developers will never create a manual.'

Naturally, the backlash from the users was very big at first, but the users could only comply when Raonsoft did not change their minds.

The place Sanghyuk was standing on right now, the Endless Plains, could be considered a tutorial area, but no one was told that this place was the tutorial, so the early players of EL were very disappointed. Not only that, it was impossible to skip so they would not know that this was the tutorial zone.

Of course, that kind of disappointment didn't last for long. The users who had become level 10 in less than one day had logged out and revealed what kind of world Eternal Life truly was, so the majority of the players later knew that these plains was the tutorial area.

Actually, there was nothing special about the endless plains. It was just a vast expanse of plains and the only special point was that monsters would rush from the surroundings every 30 minutes.

A choice of weapons would appear 5 minutes before each monster wave. 40 different types of weapons that looked like they were made from shadows protruded from the ground and once the user selected one, then they would materialize and bind itself to the user.

Weapons could be changed each wave, but once the user picked up another weapon the weapon the user picked up in the previous wave would turn into a shadow and



disappear again. This basically intended for the users to try out many different types of weapons and select one that fit them the best.

And after 20 waves, 116 types of skill books with the most fundamental skills would appear from the ground before the 21st wave.

Like with the weapons, this could be swapped out every wave as well.

Skill books could be swapped out for a maximum of 40 monster waves. Normally, around 50 monster waves would naturally level the user up to 10. *(T/N: 50 waves is 25 hours... how on earth did players reach level 10 in less than a day)*

The monster waves themselves had a very easy difficulty so even the people with no talent in the game should be able to clear them easily.

Borrowing the expression from the users, the endless plains was the only place they could experience the cheat mode.

Users could experience weapons and skill that suited them the best within these plains and this helped them a lot in their choices when they actually entered the world of EL.

Of course, after a little bit of time, the users chose their weapons and skills according to the walkthroughs on various communities rather than through their experience in the plains, but anyhow, the experience within the plains was definitely necessary.

Tap tap. Sanghyuk tapped the top of his right ear twice and semi-translucent windows appeared in front of him. This system call gesture was applied to all games by all developers starting 5 years ago, and was a very natural course of action to the people who had experience playing virtual reality games.

Sanghyuk used two fingers to enlarge the quest window on the system window and checked the time left until the first monster wave.

‘Exactly 27minutes 22 seconds left.’

The others who had logged in at the same time the server opened as Sanghyuk did might be putting their effort in to adapt to the surroundings. However, Sanghyuk knew very well what was coming, so he just stood there on the spot.

“Endless Plains... There are two things I need to get here.”

Sanghyuk had already planned out his course of action while he was waiting for its release during the past year.

The two things he needed to acquire in this place weren't so easy to get, but Sanghyuk wasn't planning to leave this place before he got them.

“To be exact, I need to get a unique-grade title and a rare-grade item.”

If someone asked Sanghyuk what the most important thing was in EL, he would reply ‘titles’ without a moment of hesitation. This was something that all users would say if they enjoyed EL.

Titles in EL could be used as ‘prefix’ titles as well as ‘postfix’ titles. Not only that, there were also titles that had constant effect without equipping them.

Of course, there was a limit of 30 titles that could be activated at once, but it could be seen how important titles were in this game than others.

In any case, titles were more important than any other game elements, and Sanghyuk had already picked out a select few titles he had to get here.

“First is the title ‘Unrelenting Challenger!’”

The unique-grade title, ‘Unrelenting Challenger’. This was the insanely rare title that could only be acquired here in the Endless Plains.

4,444 times.

Four thousand four hundred and forty-four deaths were required in order to acquire the title ‘Unrelenting Challenger’. To be exact, one needed to keep challenging despite having died that many times.

Actually, this was a title that wasn't meant to be gotten. No matter how low of a VRA a person had, anyone could crush the monsters in these Endless Plains. So, deaths of users in these plains was a very rare thing in the first place.

From that, it could be seen that dying over four thousand times in this stage didn't

make any sense. Actually, it was 10 years after EL's release that the existence of this title was revealed.

To be exact, it was revealed after Raonsoft revealed the 5 deleted titles in its 10-year anniversary.

At the time, Raonsoft claimed that there were 10 titles that the users could not acquire during the past 10 years, of which 5 were deleted due to various issues in the patch, and the remaining five still stayed within the game.

The revealed titles were the deleted 5.

What Sanghyuk was aiming for right now was one of the five titles that were deleted in that patch.

It was a unique-grade too! Unique-grade meant what it literally sounded like – only one person could acquire throughout the entire game. In other words, once Sanghyuk acquired the title, no one else would be able to get it even if they died more than 4,444 times here.

Of course, dying 4,444 times in these Endless Plains wasn't something normal. However, since Sanghyuk knew the answer, he threw his body into the monster wave without any hesitation.

If he didn't know the answer, he wouldn't have even tried this.

Deaths upon deaths.

Like that, Sanghyuk died again and again while all the others left this tutorial zone with ease.

# Chapter 7

## Drawing the Big Picture (2)

Even though the Endless Plains was a place with instant revival upon death, dying and reviving 4,444 times required quite a lot of time.

Sanghyuk filled all 4,444 deaths and challenges for 3 days with almost no sleep. By simple calculations, he took over 60 hours to do this.

With advancement in virtual reality technology, 'Shock prevention technology' applied to all official virtual reality contents with the exception of illegal contents so receiving a big shock in virtual reality only resulted in slight pain or nausea in real life.

Of course, no matter how much technology advanced, people who weren't used to attacking others or being attacked sometimes received mental shock, but the game developers protected the users as much as possible with various 'mentality support programs'.

However, even after all that, 'deaths' of avatars in virtual reality games gave the users an extremely unpleasant feeling.

That was why some people set the 'Skip death' setting on that allowed them to forcefully change their virtual reality status to false sleep when they were near death.

The 'Skip death' function was something that was never used by the higher ranked gamers, but it was a commonly used setting among normal users.

Since Sanghyuk wasn't some deviant who enjoyed dying, he would have used that function. However, that setting couldn't be used here in the Endless Plains, so he had to endure all of the deaths.

Sanghyuk could endure it since he had a lot of experience in everything that occurred in virtual reality.

And the moment he endured the 4,444th death and stood up to the monster wave again... the message he wished to see so much finally appeared in front of him.

Congratulations. You have not given up despite the challenges that overcomes you. You are qualified to acquire a special title.

You have acquired the unique-grade title [Unrelenting Challenger].

“Phew, very good!”

At that moment Sanghyuk gripped his fist while muttering before putting his hand on the handle of an ordinary iron sword that he hadn’t touched even once until now.

Even at this moment, there were large cicada-like monsters flying towards him.

Since he had achieved his very first objective, he did not need to be one-sidedly beaten by the monsters anymore. Right now, he was really happy about that.

“From now on... is my turn to kill you!”

Clang, he pulled out the sword with a shout and started swinging the sword very naturally.

To put it into an analogy, Sanghyuk was a person who was addicted to EL to the point that he knew the ‘sweetness’, ‘bitterness’, ‘saltiness’, as well as ‘acerbity’, ‘sourness’, ‘foulness’, etc. all kinds of tastes.

This was why he practically had no weapons he was unfamiliar with. He could use all variety of the weapons on the ground, but he wiped all 20 waves with just a single iron sword.

Not only that, he didn’t even glance at the skill books that appeared later and kept destroying the oncoming monsters with the same iron sword.

The reason was simple.

Although this becomes common knowledge in around 1 year, there was a secret that no one knows at this point, and it was that it was possible to acquire the weapon the user is using as long as they select just one weapon and no skills and become level 10.

The weapons that appeared in these Endless Plains were surprisingly all rare-grade items.

Since it had only been 3 days since the game was released, there wouldn't be any magic-grade items not to mention rare, so rare-grade items possessed huge value.

You have become level [10].

Congratulations. You are qualified to become a 'Traveller'. According to the will of the chaos, you, as a 'Dimensional Traveller' will now visit your first destination, the planet of 'Treenark.'

There are no specific missions for the Dimensional Travellers. Whatever you do is up to you. However... problems will have to be solved on your own as well.

May you be blessed with eternal life.

[Hidden Reward: You have acquired 'Travellers Treasure Sword']

Flash!!

He was transferred to the planet of Treenark the moment he became level 10. Treenark, simply put, was the first continent that the users of EL would experience.

New planets appeared every 1~3 years after this. In Sanghyuk's memory, the latest addition to the planets was the 7th one in his past life.

When the light that blurred his vision disappeared, the surrounding scenery had completely changed.

The faint sound of horns that could be heard afar and the familiar looks of the old inn in Falcon City was the same as how Sanghyuk remembered it.

The front and inside of the inn were filled with people who had just become 10 like Sanghyuk, so it was very noisy.

EL only operated a united server that could host users from all over the world. The old internet would be incapable of this, but server 'loads' didn't exist in Dream Network,

so almost all games operated with one united server.

Of course, city centers and other locations where many people gathered allowed for channels to prevent congestion, but they only existed in the most densely-populated areas.

In the end, what EL pursued was a single gigantic world.

New users were exchanging information with each other nearby the inn.

Since EL had almost no leaks, the users could only combine their prowess to play the game.

Normally, games would naturally lead the users through some quests, but EL wasn't so friendly. Nothing was given to the Dimensional Travellers thrown into Treenark.

All they got was a set of tattered clothes that barely hid their body. There wasn't something like a quest.

Their next course of action should be decided through conversation with NPCs or other users.

Of course, Sanghyuk spoke to neither NPCs nor other users. Since he knew the answer this time as well, he skipped all the working out and went straight to the answer.

The first thing they had to do after becoming a Dimensional Traveller was 'Soul Engraving'. This piece of information was easily acquired through conversation with NPCs in the inn.

Without Soul Engraving, it was impossible to acquire any experience at all so this was definitely the topmost priority. Soul Engraving, to explain it simply, was something like choosing a job class.

The setting was that users created 'Soul Holes' through 'Soul Engraving' and insert Ancient Knowledge into those Soul Holes in order to utilize their power, and this part contained one of the unique aspects of EL.

There were thousands upon thousands of 'Ancient Knowledge' just in Sanghyuk's memory. What was interesting that there was no limit to the number of Ancient Knowledge that could be engraved into the soul.

It was possible to engrave all of those thousands of knowledge into the soul. However, absolutely no one engraved that many souls.

There was no limit to the number of engravings, but in compensation, there was a large penalty given every time the number of Ancient Knowledge increased, so 99% of the users possessed 1~5 Ancient Knowledge.

The penalty for the number of Ancient Knowledge was very simple. 1 Ancient Knowledge naturally had no penalties at all. However, engraving one additional Ancient Knowledge would double the experience point requirements to level up.

Engraving one more for a total of 3 Ancient Knowledge would require 4 times the normal amount of experience points to level up.

8 times for 4, 16 times for 5, etc... The experience points required to level up rose exponentially, so it was realistically impossible to raise the character at all once users went over 5.

Also, Soul Engravings could only be done at level 10, and the only way to erase one's Ancient Knowledge was to initialize the character's level to 10.

In other words, they had to throw away all the karma (in EL experience points were called karma) and start over again.

Meaning, they had to carry it to the end once they made a choice.

With this being the case, there was a large amount of controversy and discussion among the users on what number of Soul Engravings was the best.

This debate went on for quite a long time, and the major opinion formed only after around 5 years had passed since the release of EL.

'One Soul for light users. Double or Triple Soul for hardcore users aiming to become rankers. And lastly, the ones who went with Quadra Souls and Penta Souls all despaired later. Even the money giant user from middle-east ended up giving up after selecting Quadra soul and pouring his money into it. Realistically, Triple Soul is the limit.'

Sanghyuk clearly remembered the collapse of those that saw potential in Quadra and Penta Souls.



“However... I’m going with Quadra!”

Sanghyuk knew the limits of Quadra more than anyone else. He didn’t just think that it was just ‘difficult’, but it was so hard that even a money giant from the middle east had given up trying to raise one avatar with a Quadra soul even after putting in around 5 million dollars-worth of money.

The reason he chose to go with Quadra despite that... was thanks to the ‘Unrelenting Challenger’ title that he had acquired through the pains he had experienced in the Endless Pains.

Title – ‘Unrelenting Challenger’

Grade – Unique

Description – May you be praised for your unrelenting will that never gives up despite countless deaths.

Effect – [Prefix: N/A] [Postfix: N/A] [Constant Effect: Reduces the amount of Karma required to level up by half.]

It was thanks to this title that Sanghyuk was able to challenge a Quadra Soul. With this title alone, he could raise his avatar like a Triple Soul despite being a Quadra Soul.

Of course, the quadrupled karma requirements to level up was quite pressuring for him, but he had the confidence to overcome those with the knowledge he had.

In fact, quite a few top rankers raised their characters splendidly with Triple Souls.

While he was thinking, he arrived at ‘The Hall of Souls’. Most cities possessed a Hall of Souls, so anyone could visit them easily.

The process of engraving Ancient Knowledge was to first make a hole for the knowledge into the soul in the Hall of Souls, and then to insert the Ancient Knowledge the user possessed.

Also, it was possible to ‘raise’ and ‘exchange’ Ancient Knowledge, but both of these were only possible through the quests, so users had to be very cautious in inserting

Ancient Knowledge.

And naturally, the number of Soul Holes had to be decided in the first Soul Engraving. Engraving one first and another one later was impossible.

The only way to change the number of Soul Holes was to initialize the character's level to 10 and start over again.

In this case, the Ancient Knowledge in possession disappeared as well, so not many people went with this option unless they were desperate.

Of course, there was no such information right now, so this would happen later through many trials and errors, but that wasn't something Sanghyuk was concerned about.

"O, Traveller, may you be blessed by the Mother God of Earth and the Sovereign God of the Heavens."

The NPC protecting the Hall of Souls mentioned the names of all the gods he served.

'Four soul holes... Now, I just need to insert the Ancient Knowledge I want one by one.'

Having made four Soul Holes for free in the Hall of Souls, Sanghyuk left the Hall and nodded his head slowly.

There were many different types of Ancient Knowledge. What was interesting was that there were no such things as ranks or grades in Ancient Knowledge. Of course, they did vary according to rarity, but that didn't correspond to grade.

Just going to the city library would allow users to acquire basic Ancient Knowledge at a low price, but those basic Ancient Knowledge didn't mean that they were useless.

Since it was possible to raise and exchange Ancient Knowledge, users could change them according to their needs while playing the game.

To put a simple example, 'Iron Guardian', which would be acknowledged as the best Ancient Knowledge for tankers was something that could be acquired by raising 'Guardian Knight', which was very easy to acquire.

Raising Ancient Knowledge like this was also an important piece of information in EL. It was to the point that information brokers, specializing in this area, had popped up later.

Of course, it wasn't like it was impossible to do anything without any Ancient Knowledge. There were two types of skills in EL, and one was the 'Soul Skills' that were acquired through the Ancient Knowledge, and the other was the 'basic skills' that could be acquired regardless of what Ancient Knowledge a user had.

An additional slot would open for the basic skills every 10 levels, and although the maximum level of EL was not set, the amount of karma required to level up would drastically increase later on, so it was impossible to learn infinite basic skills.

Right now, Sanghyuk was drawing a very big picture.

Perhaps the beginning may look very ambiguous since the picture is too large. However, Sanghyuk was dreaming of the future that no one else could possibly imagine, rather than looking what was right in front of him.

This could only be done by people who knew the future.

Without the knowledge of the future, no one could draw the picture that Sanghyuk was drawing right now. No, they wouldn't be able to create a picture half as big as his.

Even the game developers wouldn't be able to imagine what he was drawing. The legend of One Man Army started off with the sketch of such a picture.

# Chapter 8

## Monopoly (1)

Engraving four Soul Holes was equivalent to declaring that he would be walking a path that no other users could have possibly imagined. Of course, even though the experience points required to level up was now down to 4 times instead of 8 thanks to the title 'Unrelenting Challenger', that didn't mean that growth was easy.

In the beginning stages, he might not differ that much to the users with one Soul Hole, users with more than that mostly regretted in their 40s, otherwise known as the hell zone.

Only after getting through this zone would make the user a true top-tier player, but this wasn't easy. Of course, there were many methods to get through this zone.

The easiest method was to borrow the power of real cash, and the most common method was to put in an insane amount of effort.

Both methods, once the hellzone was over, would allow enormous power boost for the extra Soul Holes.

When Sanghyuk worked as the director of the game team, more than 80% of the professional gamers were Double Souls and the remaining 20% were Triple Souls. There wasn't even a single One Soul.

To classify further, the 'top-tier' pro gamers were comprised of 70% Triple Souls. The potential of Triple Souls was just that good.

That being the case, Sanghyuk had chosen Quadra Soul that no one else could perfect. This meant that he would be a special existence if he actually raised his character properly.

"Has it been 4 days since the server launched? I guess it's about time rumors start spreading, then."

The potential EL possessed as a game started being rumored for real around one week

after EL's open beta.

Of course, since the accessibility was so low, it took a few months for those rumors to bear fruit.

'Actually, right now is the time when famous rankers in my previous life had just begun playing the game, or are in the game without knowing what they need to do.'

The fact that they had to find all the information within the game made the users considerably tired. Despite that, Raonsoft told the community that it was an unavoidable choice and did not look after their needs.

This was a very good thing for Sanghyuk.

"Thanks to that, I can monopolize many things since I know many important pieces of information."

Muttered Sanghyuk and smiled in joy. What appeared in his mind were what the users referred to as the best things in his previous life.

Of course, not all of them had become rankers after they discovered those, but all the top ranking users had *something* that was evaluated as 'the greatest'. Moreover, Sanghyuk was aiming for the best of those greatest items.

The most important thing is that he could actually acquire them right now.

"It looks like I'll need to give up on sleeping for a while.

Even Sanghyuk could not know everything. That was why he didn't know when someone acquired what.

This meant that he had to move quickly in order to discover those things first, and he was planning to sleep only for 2 hours a day.

Since he had rested and trained his body precisely for this, sleeping 2 hours a day for one or two months didn't seem like it would be a problem.

'First up... is the First Mountaineer!'

Sanghyuk turned his head around to look at the sacred mountain Puyan standing

behind Falcon City and nodded his head.

Puyan was one of the five mountains that symbolized the planet of Treenark. Its height was the lowest of the five, but it had the most symbolic meaning, so it was included in the five mountains.

Regardless of which of the five, climbing to the peak of one of these mountains would earn him a special title.

First Mountaineer! It was a unique-grade title to boot.

Although it had no prefix or postfix effects, there was a constant effect which was to increase all karma acquired by 20%.

Originally, this title was known to have been acquired by a top-tier ranker referred to as the 'Climber' in his previous life, and according to the rumors, he had got this title not in Puyan but another mountain.

The reason Sanghyuk knew this information was because the pro gamers in his charge had sometimes talked about quite a few pieces of old information.

The really important information wasn't shared even between team members, but pieces of information that had no real meaning by that time were often shared a lot in private places and thanks to that, Sanghyuk had picked up quite a few pieces of information.

Normally, not many would challenge the mountain climbing even if they know that they would acquire a special title, but for Sanghyuk, who had roamed around the cliffs in search for herbs in Sword and Magic for over half a year, climbing Mount Puyan wasn't something that difficult.

And most decisively, he was still level 10 right now and had no experience points (karma) at all, so he had nothing to lose even if he died.

Just in case, he had already put the Traveller's Treasure Sword into the common bank of Falcon City, no, a 4 dimensional interspace provided to the Dimensional Traveller 'Immortal', so there were no items to lose either.

On top of that, Mount Puyan was the most sacred mountain that harbored a sleeping

God so not to mention monsters, there weren't even any beasts on the mountain.

The setting was that no puny beings could live in the sacred living place of a God. And thanks to that, Sanghyuk could try climbing Mount Puyan despite being level 10.

Since he had no pressure, he could daringly climb Mount Puyan. He had also invested all growth points he had piled until now to strength in order to climb Mount Puyan.

Since crawling up a near-vertical mountain required strength, this kind of investment was to be expected.

Eventually, he could arrive at the summit of Mount Puyan without even a single death. It was a fruitful result he had achieved after climbing non-stop for 20 hours.

You have climbed to the summit of one of the five mountains that symbolize Treenark, Mount Puyan. Your challenging mindset that has climbed to a place no one had conquered until now is qualified to become a model for others.

You have acquired the unique-grade title [First Mountaineer].

You have heard the voice of the God sleeping within the sacred mountain. This is a fragment that allows you to earn a legendary-grade quest.

“Whew, a legendary-grade quest? There was such a thing here?”

Having acquired an unexpected gain, Sanghyuk muttered in surprise and immediately opened the quest window.

Quest, ??? [Legendary]

– Mountain of the Sleeping God (Details)

– ???

– ???

– ???

“Legendary-grade fragmentary quest...”

Fragmentary quests were something that could only be activated after gathering all the fragments. They had very high difficulty and insane rewards. Sanghyuk never imagined that he would acquire something like that here.

“I never knew I’d get something like this here...”

This was an unexpected bonus. Although this wasn’t a quest in his knowledge, the value of legendary-grade quests was priceless so it could be said that he had just acquired an enormous profit.

“Well, I guess I’ll keep it now and challenge it when I can later.”

Challenging a legendary-grade fragmentary quest right now would be insane.

Title – ‘First Mountaineer’

Grade – Unique

Description – Your challenging mindset that has climbed to a place no one had conquered until now is qualified to become a model for others.

Effects – [Prefix: N/A] [Postfix: N/A] [Constant effect: >Challenging Mindset(S)  
Acquired karma increases by 20%.<]

Sanghyuk opened his title window and checked the effects of ‘First Mountaineer’ before nodding in satisfaction. Although it was slightly inferior to the Unrelenting Challenger he got from the Endless Plains despite the two being of the same grade, this was plenty amazing in itself.

It only looked inferior because Unrelenting Challenger was insane.

“With this, I can escape the pressure of being a Quadra Soul.”

With First Mountaineer, Sanghyuk could now raise his Quadra Soul avatar almost like a Double Soul. Of course, it would be more difficult than the actual Double Soul users,



but at least he would have it easier compared to Triple Soul users.

Adding a few of the karma increase titles he knew, he felt like he could raise the karma increase rate to almost 30%.

“Phew, oh yeah, climbing down will be hard too. Should I just jump off?”

Jumping off would make him arrive at the ground in no time flat. However, he couldn't do that. Even Sanghyuk didn't want to experience virtual death if he could, and since he just acquired karma through the adventure, he couldn't jump because of the things he had gained.

He calmed his breath for a while and enjoyed the view from the summit of Mount Puyan to his heart's content before climbing down the steep cliffs again.

Normally, people would have saved this scenery in the form of photos or videos with the photograph function, but Sanghyuk was quite unrelated to such trivial emotions, so he thought that viewing was enough.

Having climbed down mount Puyan, Sanghyuk returned to Falcon City again. Well, he tried to. What greeted him before Falcon City were three users who seemed to have a lot of complaints about the world.

In order to level up in EL, karma was required. This was mentioned before. However, what was interesting was that there were two different types of this karma.

One was the karma of good that could be acquired through means similar to how you acquire experience in other games. This was very similar to those 'experience points' and they naturally gathered by killing monsters or doing quests.

The other type of karma was the complete opposite.

It was referred to as 'black karma' or 'evil karma', and this could be gathered through evil acts such as killing other users or NPCs.

What was interesting that once a user leveled up even once through black karma, or gathered over 10,000 black karma, that user would become an 'malefactor'. Not only those malefactors would become no longer capable of using facilities in cities, but there would also be bounties on their heads as well.

Of course, there were contents aimed at malefactors as well as cities that only housed malefactors. And later malefactors would gather and form a big faction, but in any case, there were more demerits than merits in becoming an malefactor.

The only way to come back to normal after becoming an malefactor was to go to the Hall of Souls and forfeit everything including one's karma to the Mother God of Earth and the Sovereign God of Heaven and undergo penitence.

Penitence would not only make the user revert to level 10, but they would also have to sit still and do nothing for as long as the evil karma still remained so usually no one underwent penitence.

Not only that, malefactors could be freely attacked by normal users, and 20% of their black karma would be stolen by the killer if they died.

20% of the entire black karma meant that high-level users may lose several levels through one death.

On top of that, the malefactor would drop a random item, so malefactors feared death the most.

Of course, there were good things in becoming malefactors as well.

It was that... they could not only gather evil karma through attacking normal users, but they could also steal items from normal users as well. They could also attack those treated like NPCs by normal users and gain profit.

For example, they could hunt elves, dwarves, hobbits and other intellectual species that traded with normal users as though they were monsters. They could only acquire items and no karma through hunting monsters, but hunting special races like those would net them items as well as evil karma.

The reason most malefactors chose that path was because they could steal items from other users, and the second was that they could attack other special races as well as monsters.

These two reasons made up most of the reasons why people became malefactors.

And naturally, it was easier to become malefactors when people had low levels, so after EL's open beta service launched, there were quite a few complaints about the

malefactors' indefinite PK (Player killing).

'I forgot that now's around the time malefactors were on the rise.'

Sanghyuk made a bitter smile while looking at the three users that blocked his way. The three all had red-colored eyes.

Red eyes... this was a sign that they were malefactors.

"Now I can't even be bothered to explain anymore. Just consider yourself unlucky."

They seemed like they already had a lot of experience killing other users.

They were quite upfront about it... however, Sanghyuk knew very well that they wouldn't be able to roam so freely soon enough.

## Chapter 9

### Monopoly (2)

A few weeks from now, rumors that killing malefactors gave more karma than hunting monsters as well as giving out pretty good titles would float around, and the so-called 'top-rankers' would start hunting the malefactors. With that, malefactors would be pulled out from their roots.

Before the appearance of the user 'Killing machine', a famous malefactor who appears around a couple months later, it would become hard to see the appearance of any malefactor users.

'Oh yeah! There was that title.'

Sanghyuk remembered a title that he hadn't thought of before. Since even he couldn't remember everything clearly, there was bound to be some things he forgot.

"What the hell is up with this guy?"

"He's probably scared stiff. He looks like he has nothing on him at a glance so let's kill him quickly and look for our next target."

The three malefactor users were PK'ers (Player killers) who had killed tens of players already and they thought that Sanghyuk was scared of them.

However, their target was thinking the complete opposite.

'All three are perfect malefactors. That means that I won't get evil karma even if I kill them all due to the self-defense system, and in fact, I should be able to get some pretty karma.'

He was instead re-calculating his course of action. Of course, not only was he a lower level than the PK'ers in front of him, he lost in numbers as well, but he did not think for a second that he would lose.

\*Srrrr\*.

The three PK'ers took out iron swords that were rusted in some places. Those iron swords were the cheapest available weapons in Falcon city.

"I'll say this again, but consider yourself unlucky. I'll send you painlessly."

The malefactors seemed to consider Sanghyuk as a dead man and approached him. Right now, it had only been 4 days since the launch of the open beta, so the majority of the users didn't even know how to acquire 'Ancient Knowledge'.

With that being the case, three on one would result in one being killed without being able to counterattack at all.

In a situation where neither side could use any skills, the side with more members and more weapons could only be advantageous. Normally, that is.

'They are noobs at using the sword.'

Sanghyuk was the furthest away from a 'normal' user. Although he was unarmed and did not equip any Ancient Knowledge, he wasn't nervous at all.

PvP in EL was more familiar to him than eating. Although he possessed neither a weapon nor any Ancient Knowledge, his experience possessed greater power than those.

The moment the one at the front charged at Sanghyuk and swung his sword, Sanghyuk instead chose to close the distance and slap at his wrist with his right hand with precision.

\*Paaaah!\*

The rusted iron sword barely missed his body, but Sanghyuk didn't flinch an eyebrow. It was a natural thing to dodge as closely as possible when top-tier users fought in his previous life, so this was nothing.

"Aaack!"

Since Sanghyuk had invested all of his ten growth points into strength, the malefactor user immediately lost grip of the sword and screamed.

However, Sanghyuk's attack hadn't ended yet. Sanghyuk caught the iron sword in the

air with his left hand and immediately turned around. The reason he could steal the opponent's weapon like this was that the opponent was a malefactor user.

At this point in time, there were no users that knew this was possible. Perhaps due to that, the user that had his sword stolen stood there absent-mindedly without knowing what just happened.

\*Slash\*, "Kerrrrgh!"

When Sanghyuk rotated rapidly the rusted iron sword slashed the swordless user's abdomen deeply.

Thanks to various revision mechanisms, the feeling of slashing was completely different from actually slashing open a person's body, but Sanghyuk was instead more familiar with this feeling.

Sanghyuk knew that with this kind of feedback, low-level users with no Ancient Knowledge had no chance of surviving. So, he immediately ducked down to dodge the sword from the other two malefactor users.

Actually, the swords that these three swung around was nothing more than a child's play to him. If they used skills to swing these swords, he wouldn't have fought them so easily, but that wasn't the case.

To put it to perspective, Sanghyuk was like an adult athlete looking at pre-school children swinging around toy swords.

\*Pa-pah\*, Sanghyuk leaned left and right alternately to easily dodge the two swords that the two malefactors swung. Then he immediately struck the rusted iron sword in his right hand into the head of the malefactor on his right hand side, while simultaneously wrapping his left arm around the neck of the left hand side user.

\*Crunch\*, "Grrrrrrrrrk."

Sanghyuk tightened his left arm to twist the final user's neck. The malefactor users with a puny amount of health were too easily killed by Sanghyuk.

This all happened in mere seconds. At the moment the first user collapsed onto the ground, the sword was struck into the second malefactor user's head and continuing, the last malefactor user's neck broke.

Sanghyuk had all that hard-to-describe scenario in mere seconds and threw the user with the crunched neck onto the ground.

White light was scattering instead of red blood, but it was still true that the scene looked gruesome. However, Sanghyuk was actually very calm. Actually, the only reason he could stay indifferent was thanks to the 'User mentality support' program that was developed ten years ago and contributed a lot to the growth of the Dream Network game industry.

Any kind of situation where it might damage the user's mentality would trigger this user mentality support program, and once that was triggered, the user would feel like everything that happens from then on was a dream.

Of course, it wasn't exactly equivalent to a dream, but it did make the user feel like they were dreaming and buffered the shock as much as possible.

This program was the reason why almost all Dream Network games could be legalized and serviced to the general public.

Without this program, users may receive a huge mental shock, so this was an essential element that was applied to all Dream Network games.

This program didn't result in decreased control over the avatar. Although something like that apparently did exist in the initial stages, but none of that existed at this point in time at least.

It was just that the part where a user cruelly kills another would be forcefully toned down and feel like it is nothing. This used very complex mechanisms so explaining it sounded like it was a contradiction, but experiencing it once would make anyone understand.

There were sometimes people who received shock despite the system in place, but that kind of people only had limited access to Dream Network contents anyway.

Finally, what was most important was that Sanghyuk had a lot of experience in this field. That was why he could accept everything so naturally.

You have eliminated malefactors and stolen a portion of their evil(black) karma.

Congratulations. Enough Karma has gathered and you have leveled up.

The three malefactors on the ground disappeared into a powder of white light. They not only gifted him with a considerable amount of karma, but they also dropped quite a lot of their stolen items as well.

Sanghyuk picked up all of them. Since he didn't possess anything like a spatial expansion bag yet, he could only take these back by hand.

"To be fair, these would become trash later, but right now, they are things that can't even be bought due to the limited supply."

The items that the malefactors robbed the other users were worth quite a pretty penny at this point in time, so there was no reason to leave them behind.



Having returned to Falcon City, Sanghyuk placed all the items he brought into commissioned sales. Commissioned sales were slightly different from the auction house, but if you considered the auction a place that traded on a planetary scale with an expensive fee, commissioned sales was a system where NPCs sold the items within the city with a cheaper fee.

Since the absolute majority of the users were playing around Falcon City, he didn't need to use the auction house and pay an expensive fee.

Having disposed of all the items in his possession, Sanghyuk immediately went to the common bank and took out the Traveller's Treasure Sword.

Originally Sanghyuk was going to monopolize a few other items after acquiring the First Mountaineer title. However, his thoughts changed after defeating the three malefactors.

"The First malefactor Hunter. I can't give away such a sweet title to someone else!"

This title wasn't something easy to earn if he didn't get it now when malefactors were sprouting like bamboo after rain.

With these kinds of things, he had to get them when there was an opportunity. Titles



with 'First' attached was a unique-grade title which only one existed throughout the entire game so that was all the more reason he couldn't miss it.

"But what was the effect again? I can't remember other than the fact that it's quite good..."

The problem was that he did know about the existence of the First Malefactor Hunter but did not know what kind of effects it had. However, right now, it was better to gamble than back out, so Sanghyuk immediately started preparing a few things to hunt malefactors.

"The Great Library was in that place right?"

The place Sanghyuk was headed to was the Great Library of Falcon City. The reason he was going there was obviously to acquire Ancient Knowledge.

Sanghyuk had already planned out what Ancient Knowledge he would engrave into his four Soul Holes. Not all four Ancient Knowledge he was thinking of were things that could be acquired immediately so he could only start with the easiest one.

The reason Sanghyuk was going to the Great Library was that one of the four Ancient Knowledge he was thinking of could be found there.

To be exact, the Primary Ancient Knowledge that would later be raised into one of the four Ancient Knowledge he wanted was there.

What Sanghyuk ultimately wanted was the Ancient Knowledge referred to as the 'Shadow Knight'.

The acquisition was relatively easy as well, so it was one of the Ancient Knowledge that was discovered early on. The first requirement was to acquire the Primary Ancient Knowledge 'Knight' and raise it into the secondary Ancient Knowledge 'Blade Knight' before combining that with another Ancient Knowledge called the 'Shadow Thief'.

Shadow Thief was relatively easy to acquire as well, so Shadow Knight was actually quite low ranked in terms of scarcity.

The reason he chose this out of countless combinations of Ancient Knowledge in his

mind was that... its abilities could act as the central pivot of the Quadra Soul that Sanghyuk was planning.

# Chapter 10

## Malefactor Hunting (1)

Sanghyuk read books for a few hours in the Great Library. The books he read were the ten books of the 'Chivalry'.

The moment he flipped the last page of book 10, the system message he was waiting for had finally appeared before his eyes.

You have acquired all necessary knowledge for knights.

You have fulfilled all requirements to acquire the Ancient Knowledge 'Knight'.

Will you absorb the Ancient Knowledge 'Knight' into an empty Soul Hole? Please decide within 5 minutes.

If he didn't choose within 5 minutes, the Ancient Knowledge would return the ten books of 'Chivalry'. Of course, he could bring out the same message once he read the ten books again.

"Absorb."

However, there was no need to think about this now. After all, he had come here precisely in order to acquire this.

The Ancient Knowledge, 'Knight', will be absorbed into the first Soul Hole.

You have '3' remaining Soul Holes.

\*Shhhhhhhh\*.

The Ancient Knowledge immediately became a strand of light and filled a part of

Sanghyuk's soul.

Having acquired his first Ancient Knowledge, Sanghyuk immediately opened the system window to check the basic abilities that came with the Ancient Knowledge as well as the Soul skills that were generated with it.

### Ancient Knowledge 'Knight'

: The power of knights, passed from the ancient times, has seeped into your soul. Not only will your body become sturdier, but your mentality will also be enhanced according to the nobility of knights.

Effects: Strength of Knights(C)[Strength, Health, Agility, Endurance increases.], Mentality of Knights (C)[ [Mentality increases and resistance to mental attacks increases.], Craftsmanship of Knights(C)[Proficiency in sword and shield increases.]

### Low-rank Sword Mastery [Constant effect]

– Becomes able to wield all types of swords more proficiently.

[Proficiency : 0]

### Low-rank Triple Slash

– Rapidly slashes three times with the sword.

– Cooldown (9 seconds)

[Proficiency : 0]

### Low-rank Blunt Sword Block

– Defends the opponent's attack with the flat of the sword.

– Cooldown (20 seconds)

[Proficiency : 0]

### Low-rank Charge

- Instantly charge forward by 4m.
- Cooldown (30 seconds)

[Proficiency : 0]

Sanghyuk acquired a total of four Soul skills through the Ancient Knowledge. Although they were all low ranked, Soul skill ranks could be raised by increasing the proficiency so the power behind those skills would change according to how much effort Sanghyuk puts in.

Naturally, raising proficiency required using the skill frequently. Skills had a lot of power just by themselves, so they were treated as important in EL battles.

For example, using the Triple Slash skill was much faster and stronger than just normally slashing three times, and blocking with the sword was much easier and more effective through the use of Blunt Sword Block.

Instead, in the case of knights, they would use up much more stamina through the use of skills, so they may get more tired using the skills than not, but even after factoring that in, skills were better used than not.

“These are really nostalgic skills.”

Sanghyuk made a bitter smile while reading the information on the four Soul skills.

‘I should do the quick setting first, right?’

There were two ways to use skills; one was to use the skills just as they were.

If Sanghyuk used the Triple Slash skill while he was holding a sword, his body would move according to the Triple Slash movements. The other skills were the same.

However, using skills this way would make the character’s movements too obvious

and predictable. This was why the quick setting existed.

Quick setting allowed to skills to activate naturally through movements.

For example, if Sanghyuk quickly slashed out three times then that movement itself would become a Triple Slash skill and activate. This was called the quick setting and in fact, it wasn't easy to use.

For this reason quick setting was treated like a specialty for professional gamers or high-ranked users who weren't that far behind.

Sanghyuk was no professional gamer, but he was once an expert veiled in mystery that overwhelmed the professional gamers, so he used quick settings as well. Of course, he became unable to use them even if he wanted to when his VRA was crippled, but his sense from then still remained.

Of course, it wasn't like there was a huge difference in using quick settings and using skills normally. However, in the world of pro gamers where victory and defeat was decided with minute differences, the usability was a very big thing.

Sanghyuk took out his sword in an empty lot in Falcon City and started making quick sets. Although this was obvious, the quick setting was done through one's abilities alone.

In other words, if a user couldn't find the mysterious feeling that was felt when skills were naturally sublimed into one's movements, it was impossible to make a quick set.

Sanghyuk swung his sword or charged forward in order to apply the skills into his natural movements.

Actually, the other users didn't even know that there was such thing as a quick setting. To be exact, they knew that there was something called the 'quick setting' as there was a menu in the system window, but they didn't know how that worked.

It would take around 10 days more for the intuitive users to find out how quick setting works, but it would take more time to actually use it properly.

On the other hand, Sanghyuk finished quick setting all of his skills in just an hour. This was also thanks to the difference in experience and talent.

“Tch, I’m quite rusty. I’d have finished these low ranked skill in a flash before.”

However, the person in question didn’t seem to be satisfied. Since he spent a lot of time as a cripple, he couldn’t help his senses at his peak dulling a little.

“Phew, looks like I should stop here today.”

Sanghyuk was already logged in for 16 hours. Thanks to the Game Addiction Prevention Law, all users would be forcefully logged out when they were in continuous access for 17 hours. Since users were forcefully prevented from logging in if they didn’t rest 2 hours per 24 hours, they had to rest at least 2 hours a day.

Having logged out, Sanghyuk took a short nap. No matter how much stamina he had built up through exercise until now, he still needed minimum amounts of sleep.

He woke a little less than two hours later and immediately prepared some high-calorie cereals, vital vitamins, and low-fat milk to eat a meal that didn’t taste good but had high nutrition. Then, he looked at the various game communities while eating.

[Play EL. Play it twice. It’s super awesome.]

[I know Eternal Life is good, but it’s too expensive.]

[EL is definitely fun but it’s too hard. Won’t someone upload an initial guideline?]

[There are a couple walkthroughs in InGamez.]

[InGamez’s walkthroughs aren’t anything of value. The best thing is to make your own walkthrough by playing.]

[Aaah, I want to play it so much!]

[Hey, is this game free-PK? Why the heck are there so many red-eyed guys?]

[The latest trend is malefactors.]

...

...

Sanghyuk tried going to InGamez mid-way.

[How many Soul Holes do you need to engrave?]

[Are there any good quests for beginners?]

[How do you level up at the beginning? Also, isn't there some equipment that you can acquire relatively easily?]

[Someone please tell me how to get Ancient Knowledge.]

[Does anyone know what this 'Quick setting' is?]

[Are there any penalties to becoming a malefactor?]

...

...

InGamez wasn't that different. There was a walkthrough but it was minimal and it was flooded with questions.

"So they still haven't grasped it yet properly."

It had only been one week since the launch of the open beta, so it was natural for the users to have more questions than answers.

What was shocking was that EL's free open beta would end service tomorrow.

Of course, even after the open beta finished, Endless Plains could still be played for free, but they had to pay when coming over to Treenark from the plains.

"Oh yeah, now that I think about it, the guys at Raonsoft... they didn't have anything like paid event packaging or anything, didn't they? Wow, now that I look back at it, they had some ridiculous confidence... Were they actually that confident?"



Normally, other games would launch some kind of an event or the other when starting official service, but Raonsoft just started off their official service without any special event.

Not to mention special events, there was nothing like discount cash products. Thanks to that, they received countless complaints, but Raonsoft always held to their beliefs.

Before it was revealed that the single largest investment company, SJ, were behind their backs later, many people thought that they were doing a dangerous challenge.

However, Raonsoft's non-intervention policy actually succeeded later. They didn't even monitor the players inside either.

All they did was to monitor in-game bugs or illegal external software. The rest was decided by the gamers' free will.

Actually, this was only possible due to the perfection of the game. If some half-assed game used the same non-intervention policy, then they would have failed for sure.

Sanghyuk read down the articles in InGamez while shoving various vitamin and nutrition packs into his mouth. Since he wasn't going to stop playing games after just one or two days, he was putting a considerable amount of thoughts into his health.

Having finished resting, Sanghyuk immediately entered the capsule and logged into EL. He had acquired the Ancient Knowledge as well as the Soul skills. Since he had finished the quick settings as well, the only thing he had to do now... was to hunt the malefactors down.

Ten days into the official service...

That was how long the malefactors lasted. After that, the upper-level users who were experimenting with various things until now or were leveling up quietly would properly start their malefactor hunting and it would take a week for the malefactor users to be wiped out.

'If they get wiped out this time, then it would be difficult to see malefactors at all for quite a while, so... I need to finish the hunt in one week and get the title.'

Sanghyuk thought that now was the greatest time to hunt them down.

Once he missed this opportunity, it was very probable that he would not be able to get his First Malefactor Hunter title.

“Should I visit the Valley of the Dead first?”

Valley of the Dead was one of the closest hunting zones near Falcon City. The majority of the monsters that spawned there were various ghosts and as long as a user wasn't afraid of ghosts it would be easy to hunt them and get a pretty good amount of karma as well.

With that being the case, many users naturally flocked to there. It was just that the world of EL was so vast that even that many users didn't make it feel like it was crowded.

Actually, just the size of the Valley of the Dead was equivalent to 5~7 hunting zones put together from other games.

Even when considering the Valley of the Dead was constructed for the beginner users, it was still ridiculously wide. There were around 10 more hunting zones the size of Valley of the Dead around Falcon city, so there was no lack of monsters in hunting zones despite the exponential increase in simultaneous user log ins.

All this was possible thanks to the fact that the planet of Treenark was around 40 times bigger when compared to the entire world map of other games.

Travellers have appeared in a vast world.

Was it because of the freedom they were given? The users instinctively(?) started doing bad things first. And that was how the majority of malefactors were born...

However, since the basic penalty of malefactors was so bad, the world of their rule couldn't last long.

# Chapter 11

## Malefactor Hunting (2)

“Let’s finish up after killing a few more.”

Tao Xin and Qin Jiming were friends who started playing together from the open beta. They were both Chinese users and they began Eternal Life as soon as it began since they were quite interested in it before its release.

Both of them had pretty high VRA measurements and had quite good understanding of games so they could rush ahead of the others. However, they took one wrong path and it was to become a malefactor.

“Today’s income isn’t that good.”

“There are so many malefactors nowadays that the number of users we can rob have decreased.”

Tao Xin shook his head with a disappointed expression.

“Should we rob a malefactor instead then?”

“We can’t even get any evil karma or items off them, what good is that?”

Malefactors could kill each other. However, there was nothing to be gained from doing that.

“Hm, that’s a little disappointing.”

“We can’t help it. Other than malefactors that get in our way, we need to ignore the rest of them.”

Tao Xin and Qin Jiming were looking for prey while going roaming the Valley of the Dead. They were currently level 19, and this was quite high right now.

On top of that, they had the Ancient Knowledge ‘Archer’ and ‘Swordsman’ respectively.

Two high-level malefactors with Ancient Knowledge.

They were definitely a source of fear at this point in time.

“Let’s look around a little more.”

The two malefactors went around looking for prey. They went around the Valley of the Dead like hyenas looking for prey.

“Pant... pant...”

Tao Xin was currently running while panting heavily. Even while running continuously, he thought back to what happened 10 minutes ago, thinking about where it all went wrong.

The user that Tao Xin and Qin Jiming had found around 10 minutes ago was a perfect prey in their eyes. Well, they thought so until that user instantly slashed Qin Jiming’s head off.

That really happened in a blink of an eye.

Tao Xin and Qin Jiming’s PK style was that usually Tao Xin would shoot an arrow first to harass them and Qin Jiming would ambush the player.

At a glance, it looked simple, but in reality, it was quite a useful way of PK. They had killed numerous normal users through this pattern.

However, that user... easily dodged Tao Xin’s arrow. With Tao Xin’s long-range harassment not working, Qin Jiming’s ambush naturally failed as well. In fact, Qin Jiming was defeated instead.

That user blocked Qin Jiming’s ambush lightly with the sword and simply played around with Qin Jiming. Tao Xin tried to salvage the situation somehow and shot arrows continuously while using all of his Soul skills, but that user instead mysteriously put Qin Jiming in the trajectory and the arrow hit Qin Jiming.

Ironically, both Qin Jiming and Tao Xin were malefactors so they could hurt each other. Like that, an element that normal users wouldn’t have to worry about became a fatal weakness to the malefactors and in the end, Tao Xin and Qin Jiming became

hindrances to each other.

At the last moment, three consecutive slashes were swung fast.

Those three slashes easily hit Qin Jiming's arm, body and neck and he was defeated that easily.

Obviously, Tao Xin could only run when Qin Jiming died. Their prey wasn't a prey but a monster so Tao Xin ran like mad.

'Just where the hell did such a monster pop out from?'

Tao Xin had killed a fair share of players until now, but this was a first time for him. In fact, the two had killed users that were pretty high level and had a lot of experience.

And they didn't feel anything like this until now.

'No one can win against this...'

Although Tao Xin felt slightly sorry for Qin Jiming, the only thought on his mind right now was to survive on his own. However... that was just false hope.

\*Swoosh, crack!\*

A shadow fell down from the sky and accurately struck Tao Xin's body.

"Errgh!"

Since he was hit while he was running at full speed, Tao Xin fell backward. The one that toppled him over was the user that killed Qin Jiming, no, Sanghyuk.

Tao Xin thought that he'd be able to run away from Sanghyuk, but unfortunately, that was impossible.

The Valley of the Dead was a place Sanghyuk had been to countless times in his previous life, so Tao Xin's escape path was as clear as day to him.

So, Sanghyuk took a shortcut and blocked Tao Xin's front.

"Ugh... just what are you?"

Shouted Tao Xin in Chinese. However, Sanghyuk understood his words. This was possible thanks to the real-time interpretation system for Dream Network, developed 5 years ago.

The moment Tao Xin spoke, his words would naturally be translated and would appear on the right of Sanghyuk's vision. Since it took less than 1 second for the text to appear, there were no hindrances in real-time conversation.

Just that it was possible for too many texts to pop up if there were many people talking in different languages at once, but that could simply be turned off in important moments.

"That's not the important thing right now, is it?"

\*Srrr.\*

Sanghyuk had no time to have a chat with a malefactor. His head was currently filled with the thoughts to kill 100 malefactors as quickly as possible and acquire the First Malefactor Hunter title.

Tao Xin tried to stand up and run away. However, Sanghyuk approached him quicker than he could stand up with a rapid rush forward that contained the low rank Charge skill.

And a follow up Triple Slash!

Sanghyuk's sword instantly slashed Tao Xin's body and arm.

"Urgh!"

Of course, there was nothing like pain. However, there was a really unpleasant feeling. This unpleasant feeling replaced pain in Dream Network games, and it was similar to being splashed with a liquid containing all sorts of things in it.

It wasn't like Tao Xin's health had dropped completely so he tried to fight back. The white light scattering from various parts of his body signified that his state wasn't good, but it wasn't enough to make him collapse yet.

However, no matter how hard he struggled, Sanghyuk was on top of his head. To be

exact, Sanghyuk too easily predicted his simple melee attack and left him with sword wounds after dodging them with ease.

In the end, Tao Xin couldn't even last one minute.

In the first place, it was impossible for someone who chose 'Archer', a long-range class to endure Sanghyuk's attack.

Even Qin Jiming couldn't last 3 minutes with his 'Swordsman' Ancient Knowledge, it was natural for Tao Xin to last even less.

\*Swoosh, crush!\*

In the end, The moment Tao Xin's life became 0, Sanghyuk's Traveller's Treasure sword pierced his heart.

Tao Xin had set the 'skip death' setting on so he didn't even know how he died.

"This is the forty-seventh..."

Sanghyuk defeated Tao Xin and muttered while he stood up. Tao Xin was the 47th malefactor he had killed.

There were 53 remaining now, and at this pace, he would be able to finish all 100 in 4 days.

Honestly, there were malefactors everywhere right now.

Half the users he discovered were malefactors.

Sanghyuk picked up all the items that Tao Xin had dropped. Neither Qin Jiming nor Tao Xin dropped any expensive items, but they weren't so worthless that he would just abandon them here.

'Looks like I should commission the miscellaneous items in Falcon City and come back again.'

Besides acquiring the First Malefactor Hunter title, he also earned quite a bit of karma as well as money from selling their loots.

Since Sanghyuk intended to hunt them down anyway, everything was a profit. Actually, killing malefactors was a quicker way to gather karma.



“There were no fatal bugs, and there were four cases of minor NPC AI errors. Those four were already fixed by ‘Chaos’ with its internal correction program.”

The development team’s report finished.

Since this was a meeting to check everything after the official launch, team leaders of all departments had participated via video calls.

“The in-game errors will be handled by Chaos so the development team should look into external attacks or illegal programs.”

Chaos was the single greatest artificial intelligence program developed by Raonsoft through 10 years of research. In fact, EL was born practically thanks to Chaos alone.

Chaos could be considered the Creator God of EL. Chaos watched all matters that happened within Eternal Life with its divine eyes and managed the world.

Of course, just because Chaos was there didn’t mean that the development team was unnecessary. Chaos itself needed to be managed by the development team, so President Seo Wontae of Raonsoft always looked after the development team.

“Operation team, how is the user influx?”

“It’s increasing rapidly. Since there were praises after praises of EL’s game elements in almost all existing communities, the number of users are expected to increase even faster in the future.”

“That’s good. Once the number of users increases, the PPL (Product placement) problem will be solved too, right?”

“Yes, as long as the number of users increases, there will be plenty of companies wanting to advertise in our game.”

“Take it slow. We aren’t in a rush anyway.”



Smiled Seo Wontae lightly. At first, even the invincible president was nervous, but right now, he was sure that EL was a huge hit.

“Are there any other problems?”

“The number of increasing malefactors is a slight concern.”

The game balance team’s team leader, spoke in a careful tone. Since Raonsoft’s game policy was ‘non-intervention’, the balancing team had to be careful when mentioning such things.

“We cannot interfere with the game just because the number of malefactors increased. I will repeat this again, but Eternal Life pursues infinite freedom. So the number of malefactors should be overcome by the users themselves.”

“But once the number of malefactors increases too much, the normal users may experience a big damage...”

“Sheesh, you still don’t get it. Did I say that you had to stay still? We may not be able to interfere with the actual game, but we can from outside the game. For example, if you secretly leak the information on how you can get large rewards by killing malefactors on several online communities, this will no longer be a problem. Do I really need to tell you this? I already allowed controlling the game balance in a way that it doesn’t impact the game much.”

When Seo Wontae spoke in frustration, the balancing team’s team leader could only repeat his apologies.

“The operation team too. Don’t just fool around because you don’t need to monitor the game much and look into the direction that the users are going towards by looking at various online communities. We need to be aware of all the changes that are occurring within the game.”

Seo Wontae’s principle was simple.

Direct intervention in the game wasn’t allowed, but indirect control from outside the game was allowed. This was how he operated EL.

# Chapter 12

## Secret Dungeons (1)

You have defeated 100 malefactors for the first time and have stolen their black karma. You are worthy of praise for doing something that no one in Treenark has ever done yet.

You have acquired the unique-grade title [First Malefactor Hunter].

Sanghyuk could acquire what he wanted after killing the 100th malefactor. Since this was something he had acquired after a week of hard work, this felt more valuable to him.

“This isn’t good. I’m too rusty.”

A normal person would have been satisfied with killing 100 malefactors in one week, but Sanghyuk was dissatisfied instead.

He had experienced many PvP while hunting down 100 malefactors and did not make a single mistake if you look at the results. However, Sanghyuk didn’t really like his own movements that he felt at that time.

Sanghyuk felt that his condition was around 70% of when he was at his peak. Even with all that effort until now, his senses had dulled due to living a life of a cripple for so many years, so it could only take time to recover his full ability at his peak.

Sanghyuk thought that he had to put in more effort as he checked the details on the title First Malefactor Hunter. He did know that it was good, but didn’t know the specific effects, so he opened the window in expectation.

Title – ‘First Malefactor Hunter’

Grade – Unique

Description – A special power can be felt from you, who has defeated 100 malefactors for the first time.

Effects [Prefix: 30% increase in movement speed when facing malefactors] [Postfix: 30% increase in health recovery speed when facing malefactors.] [Constant effect: All abilities increases by 7% when facing malefactors.]

“Oh! This had a percentage increase effect.”

Although this was obvious, percentage increase effects were always good. Sanghyuk could finally understand why he thought that the First Malefactor Hunter was an awesome title.

“Against malefactors, you’ll be hard-pressed to find anything better than this.”

Personally, he really liked the movement speed increase option so he was more and more delighted with this title.

‘I leveled up quite a lot through this hunt and recovered enough of my PvP senses to not lose to anyone so I guess it’s a satisfying result? Oh, I earned tons of money so I can say it’s a serious profit.’

Sanghyuk nodded his head while evaluating the malefactor hunt this time. Looking at the results, everything was good. What he liked the most was the fact that he could level himself up to 24, and although this wasn’t accurate, the top-tier characters had levels around 27 to 30.

The vast majority of them were One Soul. There may be Double Souls, but there were absolutely no Triple Souls over level 25.

‘Now, those highest-ranking users should be getting ready for hunting malefactors right? It’s not so bad to hunt malefactors like this, but I don’t need to compete with them. Besides, I still have a lot left to earn so I guess I should put off the malefactor hunt for a while.’

Everything had their own time. In that sense, Sanghyuk had sucked all the juice out of hunting the malefactors early and turned his head around to somewhere else when the others were just about to come.



There were countless dungeons in the planet of Treenark. Dungeons were mainly split into 'public dungeons' and 'secret dungeons', and public dungeons were literally just a dungeon that was revealed for all users to enter.

There might be some restrictions on entering the dungeon according to the dungeons themselves, but anyone fulfilling their requirements could enter.

On the other hand, secret dungeons, like their name, wasn't a dungeon that anyone could enter.

Secret dungeons were bound to the user that discovered it, and the public dungeon belonged to the Creator God that created the world of EL, so there could only be stark contrasts between the two.

There were countless secret dungeons in the planet of Treenark. Due to the characteristics of secret dungeons, there were countless generation and destruction of them so the exact number could not be counted. Instead, the number of public dungeons could be counted since they were permanent.

Public dungeons were usually those that could only be cleared in teams, so Sanghyuk couldn't try those yet.

However, secret dungeons were different. The majority of secret dungeons were of the small scale, and just discovering those dungeons would give the user a considerable bonus, so it was correct to focus on secret dungeons right now.

While the other users were killing monsters in fields without even knowing the existence of secret dungeons, Sanghyuk was planning to level up rapidly by looking for secret dungeons and getting bonus karma.

'Even I don't know when the first secret dungeon was discovered. However, I *do* know two secret dungeons that became a hot topic later!'

Even Sanghyuk could not know everything about all secret dungeons even if he came back from the future. Secret dungeons, like their names implied, were secretive in about everything that they had so there were more SangHyuk didn't know than he did.

However, just the information on the dungeons he knew wasn't at a level that an

ordinary user would know. It was just that the pool of information on secret dungeons was so large that he had more things that he didn't know.

First off, Sanghyuk had the information on two secret dungeons that were super good for leveling up at the beginning. Those two secret dungeons were monopolized by a group of people and the reason this was revealed to the public was that those users boasted to the public on TV a few years later.

Sanghyuk was also deeply impressed by that program, so he remembered those two dungeons.

The dungeon that was discovered before the other was the 'Merlog dungeon' which was hidden in the 'Abandoned Fishing Village'.

Merlog Dungeon was only a D-rank dungeon, but the bonus karma was 40% and with a small size and easy monsters, 'merlogs', in the mix, it was extremely easy to gather karma in this place.

This Merlog dungeon was known to be discovered very early on, so Sanghyuk had already come to the 'Abandoned Fishing Village' in order to discover it first.

'After hunting all 16 types of monsters, I need to dive into the sea in the fishing village with the different-colored pearls I get from each species. There's an old stone tablet at the bottom of the sea, and putting the 16 types of pearls into those holes can open the secret dungeon. That's as far as I know...'

Such a complex process was required to open the secret dungeon. Sanghyuk was someone who already knew the answer, so he could approach the secret dungeon easily, but other users would have to acquire hints from various places and put them together to find out.

Perhaps Sanghyuk was cheating, but playing fairly after coming to the past was funny in itself.

Sanghyuk had already purchased all 16 types of pearls from the commissioned sales store. Since no one knew that the pearls held such a secret, he could get them at a very low price.

It was obviously more efficient to buy them with gold. Since the chances of the monsters dropping the pearls wasn't 100%, hunting around the fishing village was too

inefficient.

Since he had acquired the pearls and knew the location of the dungeon, Sanghyuk didn't hesitate to swim in the sea in front of the village. Now, he just had to look for the old tablet that seemed to be below the sea.

Sanghyuk found the tablet after 3 hours of searching underwater. In that process, a normal skill, and a life skill, 'swimming' was created, but this was a skill that was crucial later on, so it wasn't a bad result.

A hidden place within the sea, the place of Merlogs.

The secret dungeon 'Merlog's Treasury' has been opened.

Merlog's Treasury will be bound to the Dimensional Traveler 'Immortal'.

Up to three users can be registered for this dungeon.

Sanghyuk immediately entered the dungeon after it was bound to him. This wasn't deep sea or anything, but it was quite painful to keep his breath in so he was planning to get some breaths by entering the dungeon.

Having entered the dungeon, Sanghyuk first looked at the information on 'Merog's Treasury'.

Secret Dungeon [Merlog's Treasury]

- Bound to the Dimensional Traveler 'Immortal'

- Registered Dimensional Travelers [Immortal], [N/A], N/A]

: A small storehouse where merlogs gather their treasures. There are many merlogs that protect the treasures, but they don't look threatening.

- Bonus karma : +40%

- Rewards for clearing the dungeon : One of the shiny treasures that merlogs had

gathered

- Time to reactivate the dungeon after it's cleared : 1 hour
- Dungeon duration time : Infinite
- Maximum number of clears : 100 times

The dungeon was exactly like how he knew it. First, there were no registered Dimensional Travellers, and the bonus karma was indeed 40%. Considering how secret dungeons normally had 10~20% increase, it was a considerably high number.

Merlog's Treasury was a one-way path and had three small chambers mid-way and the boss room was at the end where the boss 'Blue-horned Merlog' would come out.

The clear condition of this dungeon was to kill the blue-horned merlog, and the rewards could be received by clearing the dungeon.

Shiny things collected by merlogs didn't have any good things in it, but there might be some useful stuff among them.

And once cleared, the dungeon reactivated after 1 hour. Merlog's Treasury had limitless duration, but there were secret dungeons with extremely short durations as well.

And the most important thing was the maximum number of clears. This meant that the secret dungeon would be destroyed once the dungeon was cleared 100 times.

"It definitely is awesome."

Sanghyuk had experienced numerous secret dungeons in his previous life as well, but this dungeon could be considered top-tier in the beginning stages. The fact that merlogs were one of the five easiest monsters to kill was very important here.

That meant that the dungeon could be cleared repeatedly in a short time, and whether it was a game or real-life, time was money.

'The dungeon duration time is infinite so let's go look for the other secret dungeon now that I bound this place.'

Once bound, secret dungeons could not be entered by anyone else unless the master of the dungeon, in this case, Sanghyuk, registered them.

In fact, no one was talking about secret dungeons because they weren't revealed yet, but in the future, there would be websites specifically for trading the secret dungeons so the importance of secret dungeons could be seen.

Sanghyuk knew that there would come a world where secret dungeons were money, but he didn't plan to sell this Merlog's Treasury to someone else.

He was going to monopolize it since it contained all the good stuff.

"But since I'm here anyway, should I clear it once? Well, let's do it to see how my clear time is."

Originally, Sanghyuk was going to leave the dungeon again, but changed his mind to clear the dungeon once.

\*Srrrrr\*

Sanghyuk pulled out the Traveler's Treasure Sword on his back and looked ahead. In front of him was a small cave. This was the entrance to the secret dungeon 'Merlog's Treasury'.



# Chapter 13

## Secret Dungeons (2)

Merlogs were weak and Sanghyuk's battle capability was quite good so his time to clear all of the dungeon was insanely good.

27 minutes 22 seconds.

Even though Merlog's Treasury was a small-scale dungeon, this kind of time was worthy to take first place if there was a time attack competition.

A normal user would have taken at least an hour or two to clear the dungeon, but Sanghyuk cleared the dungeon easily by shortening his movement distances as much as possible and killing as many Merlogs as he could at once.

"Hm, if I shorten the movement distance and deal more damage when the boss is stunned, I think I can reduce the time for around 5 more minutes."

It was an insane record already, but Sanghyuk was thinking of shortening it even further. He definitely was someone far from normal.

He left Merlog's Treasury and returned to Falcon City again. The second dungeon he had to look for was surprisingly within Falcon City itself.

He didn't know the exact name of this dungeon either, but in that TV program, they called it the 'juicy sewer dungeon'. Then why did Sanghyuk look for Merlog's Treasury before he looked for this dungeon?

The reason was simple. It was because the guys on the program said that they found this dungeon after they found the Merlog dungeon. That meant that discovering the Merlog dungeon first meant discovering the sewer dungeon first as well.

Honestly, he didn't know when their 'very early stages' meant, so he could only try things out like this.

In any case, since he discovered the Merlog's dungeon, the only thing left to do was

the discover the sewer dungeon first as well.

What was interesting was that Falcon City already had a public dungeon named 'Falcon Sewers'.

Falcon Sewers was the dungeon made for beginners that users could experience for the first time in Falcon City.

However, this couldn't be looked down upon just because it was a beginner's dungeon since the scale was bigger than most final raid contents of other games.

Users could feel the whole league of Eternal Life from here on, and they even talked about how Falcon Sewers could be made into an independent game.

Of course, at this point, the absolute majority didn't even have the qualifications to enter Falcon Sewers, so there was no talk about it.

'Falcon Sewers started to be conquered one month into the official launch, right? It looks like there's still around 3 weeks left.'

Although Sanghyuk was trying to discover all the things that he could, he was planning to skip Falcon Sewers. First off, he lacked too many things to conquer Falcon Sewers right now, and the effort-to-reward ratio was too small to his liking.

So, Sanghyuk decided that it would be better to skip Falcon Sewers altogether. However, he was going to make the 'juicy sewer dungeon' wholly his and monopolize it.

A little outside Falcon City, there was a field where 'Falcon Bandits' appeared. And killing NPCs belonging to this group resulted in getting an item called 'bandit's nameplate'.

This nameplate was the quest item that was required to complete one of the most common quests in Falcon City, 'Exterminating enemies of Falcon City'.

Bringing this nameplate resulted in getting additional amounts of karma according to the number of nameplates, and a total of 10,000 nameplates could be exchanged by one person. Also, it was possible to raise the familiarity with the guards at Falcon City so it was quite a useful item.

In EL, there weren't that many items that couldn't be traded. So, these bandit nameplates were also traded a lot.

Since these nameplates had a variety of uses, there were both high demand and supply. Sanghyuk bought a thousand of these nameplates from the commissioned sales store. He used the majority of the gold he had gathered from killing malefactors here, but he didn't think it was a waste.

In fact, it was more of a waste to hunt those bandits to get those thousand nameplates. Nameplates, like all other miscellaneous items, could be stacked, and above the nameplate was the holographic number 1,000.

With those 1,000 stacked nameplates, Sanghyuk went to the guards at Falcon City and received karma as compensation. However, what he wanted wasn't just karma.

Congratulations. Your familiarity with the Falcon City Guards has increased a lot and reached the 'friendly' stage. Now, you can visit the Security Office of the Guards and talk with the Guard Captain.

This was what Sanghyuk wanted. To be exact, it was the qualifications to enter the Security Office.

Surprisingly, the 'juicy sewer dungeon' existed below the Security Office.

Bringing a thousand bandit nameplates allowed a user to build the familiarity up to 'friendly' with the guards at Falcon City, and bringing ten thousand would allow the user to build the familiarity up to 'colleagues' and enter the security guards.

However, Sanghyuk didn't need to raise enough familiarity to enter the guards, so he only bought one thousand. Sanghyuk entered the Security Office as soon as he was qualified.

Thanks to the 'friendly' familiarity, the NPCs belonging to the Falcon City guards all greeted Sanghyuk with smiles.

This familiarity system was just as important as titles in EL, and was largely separated into 'personal' and 'group'. The more important of the two were personal and group was secondary.

For example, even if Sanghyuk raised the familiarity with the Falcon City Guards to 'colleagues', if he made a mistake in a personal relationship with an NPC that belonged to it, that specific NPC may hate Sanghyuk unlike the other NPCs in that group.

In any case, this familiarity system wasn't treated as important among the users right now, but they would realize how important this is as time passes.

Until now, no guards were related to Sanghyuk through personal matters, so all the NPCs had positive attitudes towards him. Eventually, Sanghyuk entered the basement of the Security Office without being held back.

Having come to the basement, Sanghyuk thought back to what those guys spoke about in that TV program again.

'An old shelf on the wall... they took out the book containing the map of Falcon City Sewers, didn't they?'

Sanghyuk approached the shelf in one corner of the basement and looked for the 'Falcon City Sewer maps' book.

'Here it is.'

Sanghyuk found the book quickly and pulled it out without hesitation.

When he did, the entire shelf started moving sideways.

You have discovered a separate sewer that exists under Falcon City.

The secret dungeon 'Falcon City 77th Sewer' has been opened.

'Falcon City 77th Sewer will be bound to the Dimensional Traveller 'Immortal'.

A total of four users can be registered for this dungeon.

'It worked!'

He knew the exact answer as well this time, and could discover the secret sewer dungeon without much of a problem. Like this, Sanghyuk acquired the results and

skipped all the processes so he could discover two secret dungeons first and monopolize it.

Normal users would not only have to gather a lot of information, but they also had to extract a few possibilities by combining those informations and finally had to test each of those possibilities out just to find one dungeon.

Obviously, it was pointlessly more complex than what Sanghyuk did.

Secret dungeon [Falcon City 77th sewer] >D rank<

- Bound to the Dimensional Traveler ‘Immortal’

- Registered Dimensional Travelers [Immortal], [N/A], [N/A], [N/A]

: A sewer that was made when Falcon City was built but was completely closed off after a long time. It had disappeared from the memories of everyone, but there are some special items among the things that flowed into this sewer.

- Bonus karma: +10%

- Dungeon clear rewards: Special items that have flown into the sewer.

- Reactivation time after clearing the dungeon: 1 hour.

- Dungeon duration: Infinite.

- Maximum number of dungeon clears: 150 times.

The entrance to the secret dungeon behind the shelf in the basement of Falcon City Security Office was one that could only be seen by Sanghyuk alone. Since that was the case, Sanghyuk entered the dungeon and checked the information on the dungeon before leaving again without worry.

‘I’ve procured the two hunting zones, so all that’s left is to grind.’

Sanghyuk exited the Security Office with a satisfied expression and went to the biggest magic store in Falcon City.

The Abandoned Fishing Village and Falcon City both contained their respective secret dungeons. Sanghyuk was planning to alternate between the two secret dungeons and level up rapidly.

First, Sanghyuk was planning to just run to the Abandoned Fishing village. It would take him around an hour to run to the village if he ran, but honestly, he could use the 'Marking Book' to recall himself there as well, but right now, he didn't have that much money to recharge those recalls on top of buying the Marking Book.

What he *could* afford, however, were rechargeable Return Stones.

With the rechargeable Return Stones that could be used 10 times per charge, he could use it usefully when returning to Falcon City from the Abandoned Fishing Village.

He actually wanted to use the return stones that could hold 100 returns per charge, but there was no need to buy something so expensive right now.

Once the travelers left Falcon City for various parts of the planet of Treenark, Marking Books were necessary items for all travelers.

Marking Books, Spatial Expansion Bags, and Return Stones were a must-have item for a Dimensional Traveler.

Spatial Expansion Bags were absolutely necessary since EL didn't have the concept of 'inventories', and Return Stones were also necessary to return to the saved point that the user had saved before.

The number of markings in the Marking Book would increase as the level rises, but without the Marking Book, users wouldn't even dream of traveling through the planet of Treenark.

He decided to buy the Marking Book later and first bought the Return Stones and ran to the Abandoned Fishing Village. With a Marking Book, he would be able to alternate between the two locations easily, but considering the reactivation time of the two secret dungeons, there was no problem just using the Return Stones to travel between the two.



Sanghyuk finished all of his preparations and started alternating between the two secret dungeons without even wasting a minute.

He received large amounts of karma in Merlog's Treasury and acquired considerably expensive items from the 77th sewer.

Especially, killing the 'Giant Sewer Rat', the boss of the sewer dungeon, gave him a Magic-grade set item and this was a very good thing.

First off, EL's item hierarchy went from normal → magic → rare → unique → legendary → god; and set items were usually treated like items of a rank above.

At this point in time, there weren't many magic-grade items in the market, so magic-grade set items that were treated like rare-grade items were of tremendous value.

Falcon City's hero, Harkan's, equipment.

Not to mention Harkan's sword and shield, his armor and cape as well... Sanghyuk continued clearing the sewer dungeon to gather the magic-grade set items.

When he cleared the sewer around 80 times, he could finally get one full set of Harkan equipment. He had a couple of other parts, but 'Harkan's Helmet' was not to be seen until the 80th clear.

# Chapter 14

## The Second Ancient Knowledge (1)

What was interesting that each equipment that belonged to the Harkan set had a hidden story behind it, which made up an entire story once all the parts were put together.

Originally Harkan was one of the 8 heroes that drove out the 'Army of Death' that polluted Mount Puyan and built Falcon City. However, in his fight with the Army of Death, a small 'Darkness Fragment' was stuck inside his heart. The problem was that no one knew that the Darkness Fragment was embedded on Harkan's heart. Even Harkan himself didn't know.

Eventually, the small Darkness Fragment changed Harkan little by little, and the just, upright Harkan changed into a sneaky dictator.

The corrupted Harkan eventually clashed with the other heroes due to his evil acts. No matter how great he was, he couldn't go against all the other heroes by himself, so he was naturally driven back. In the end, Harkan was shot through the head by a 'Golden Heavenly Arrow' which was shot by another hero, but coincidentally, his corpse fell into the sewers of Falcon City, which was under construction at that time.

This was the reason his equipment could be acquired from the sewer. Not only the 77th Sewer Sanghyuk was in right now, but the public dungeon 'Falcon Sewer's also dropped these items as well.

After Falcon Sewers started being cleared, Harkan equipment became famous. And for quite a while, it was called the 'uniform' among the users and received lots of love.

Of course, the final boss of the sewers 'Polluted Harkan' gave a special set of Harkan equipment set since he was the boss, but those were made for a few special people.

Sanghyuk was thinking of selling all the Harkan equipment before the price dropped due to the increase in supply.

Harkan equipment had average stats and had quite good set effects, so all users really



liked this set. However, in Sanghyuk's view, they were just items that he would pass by.

Sanghyuk's level increased to 28 in just 10 days.

In Eternal Life, levels increased quite quickly until level 20, and the speed would decrease from level 20 to around 25, before the gates of hell appeared.

At level 30, the 1st 'Hell zone' began, and all users thought that level 30s were the true level up hell. However, later, the first user to reach level 40 would realize that level 30 to 40 wasn't a hell after all after seeing the required karma to level up to 41.

The true hell began at level 40.

Until the second planet was added later, all users suffered quite a lot in that pit of hell.

Although Sanghyuk wasn't even at the first hell zone yet, his level of 28 was definitely not low.

Although not exact, the users with the highest levels in EL was around 34~36 according to various online forums.

However, the majority of these people were One Soul. There were an extreme minority of Double Souls as well, but they couldn't be compared to Sanghyuk. He was raising a Quadra Soul, so he was, in fact, raising his level faster than anyone else.

*\*Pzzzzt!\**

A strong electric current shot out from the Merlog's blue horn. The boss monster, Blue-horned Merlog, of Merlog's Treasury struggled to its last breath, but that didn't make any difference to Sanghyuk.

Sanghyuk had long since seen through its pattern, so he avoided its desperate attack just by rolling his body sideways.

*\*Crackle!\**

When the strong electric current hit the floor in vain, Sanghyuk's sword was swung three times in succession.

\*Pa-pa-pah, slash!\*

The Blue-horned Merlog had almost zero health anyway, so it couldn't endure anymore. Its head was separated from its body with three sword slashes and collapsed onto the floor.

You have defeated the Blue-horned Merlog and cleared the Merlog's Treasury.

Glittering amethyst bracelet, an item that the Merlogs had gathered, has been dropped on the ground.

You have filled the maximum amount of clears by clearing 100 times.

Merlog's Treasury will disappear.

Sanghyuk cleared the Merlog's Treasury completely in just 10 days. What was disappointing that there was no all-clear reward since it was a low-rank secret dungeon, but that didn't matter since he acquired quite a lot of things by clearing it 100 times.

Although the 77th Sewer had around 50 clears left, Sanghyuk planned to sell it once the interest in secret dungeons rose a lot later, for a high price of course.

Everything would be a lot more expensive when there was little supply, so he should be able to get quite a profit if he sold it well.

He had long since fully fitted himself with the entire Harkan equipment set.

Harkan's Helmet, Armor(top), Armor(bottom), Sword, Shield, Boots, Cape – for a total of 7 pieces.

Once he fully equipped himself, he finally looked like he was a semi-pro. Of course, in Sanghyuk's eyes, this wasn't that much different from beginner's clothes, but at this point in time, there weren't any better alternatives.

He commissioned all the other items saving a set for himself. Since it would be difficult to sell them for good prices if he uploaded all of them once, he teased the market by uploading one at a time.

Only this way could he sell all of his loot in the most expensive way.

Actually, with EL's popularity on the rise, there were many contents related to EL not inside it, but outside as well, and among them was a site that traded items.

If he used that website, then he might be able to earn some pretty penny, but Sanghyuk didn't bother doing that. He still had enough money for his everyday life. Right now, in-game currency, 'gold', was more important than real cash.



[I declare Eternal Life as the best Dream Network game of all time!]

[The enraging EL has overwhelmed the Dream Network game industry.]

[Five secrets to the popularity of EL, the game expected to take the crown in one month.]

[Real-time ratings of 9.9 from the users! Every user has fallen to the charm of EL!]

...

...

EL finally blew it.

Like the articles, EL, just one month after its official launch, dominated all other games in the Dream Network and would stay like that for 15 more years.

"So it's about time Raonsoft started rowing its boat."

Muttered Sanghyuk as he read the articles related to EL in various game websites.

"And it's about time guilds start appearing."

There wasn't much information on guilds yet. What was important was that it wasn't *known*, it still did *exist*.

'Which guild was it again that defeated the sewer boss 'Polluted Harkan' again? Was it

Terrícūlum? Or was it Shooting Star's Rising?

Sanghyuk thought up of a few guilds that were famous at the beginning of EL, but he couldn't remember who was it that killed Polluted Harkan for the first time.

"Well, that's not important. I'm going to skip it anyway."

Going through his mind, Sanghyuk shook his head, since it was meaningless. It wasn't Sanghyuk's style to be conscious about something he had already given up on.

"Harkan is just child's play after all."

Sanghyuk thought up of the countless dungeons that boasted hellish difficulty as well as their bosses. There were many that he had ridiculous amounts of trouble to kill.

Although Sanghyuk wasn't active in any of the top-tier guilds, the workshop where he slaved away was akin to a gigantic guild, so there were times when they went on raids on a workshop scale. So he had a lot of experiences with raid as well.

'Anyway, while they shovel away in the sewers, I should prepare for something else, right?'

Sanghyuk felt that it was about time to get his second Ancient Knowledge. The reason he hadn't gotten his second Ancient Knowledge until now was that he lacked the requirements to get it.

However, he was now over level 25 and had enough gold. With this, he should be able to get his second Ancient Knowledge.

The second Ancient Knowledge Sanghyuk was planning to get today could be considered the nucleus of the Quadra Soul he was planning.

The same thing that gave the 'Crash' Choi Sangryul the title of the strongest in his previous life! Although the one who realized his theory in real life was Choi Sangryul, the one that completed the theory was Sanghyuk himself.

Although he could only give it to someone else since he was crippled in his previous life, it was different now. Sanghyuk was no longer a cripple.

Nor did he have a reason to become one.

In his previous life, Sanghyuk was slaved away in an illegally modified VR capsule without a proper rest and was inflicted with a strange disease called the 'VR Overindulgence Syndrome'.

This disease had no effect on everyday life, but entering VR would mess up all the senses and would screw up measuring any VRA at all.

Meaning, he was basically 'crippled' in virtual reality.

Before Sanghyuk returned to the past, there were no signs of that getting better. In the first place, this syndrome was treated like a new incurable disease, so there was no remedy for it.

The reason Sanghyuk took care of his own body and gave his body proper rest was also that he had already experienced the results of overdriving his body.

Of course, that time, his body was driven to the limits against his will and an additional damage was added from the stress, but in any case, Sanghyuk had no plans to become a cripple yet again.

"There we go!"

Sanghyuk, who was reading the internet through the tablet PC while doing push-ups, stood up.

He had his nutritional, albeit not tasty, meal and had exercised as well. Since he had some sleep just a few hours before, he was in a great condition.

"Very good. Should I go at it again then?"

Sanghyuk looked at the VR capsule in his room with a comfortable smile, since he was in great condition.

# Chapter 15

## The Second Ancient Knowledge (2)

The Ancient Knowledge Sanghyuk was planning to get for his 2nd Soul Hole was very rare regarding scarcity. However, its popularity was extremely low, and in fact, was probably among the bottom 5.

Of course, this was in his previous life. Right now, nobody knew such a thing existed.

Having logged into EL, Sanghyuk went to the Six-Nine street within the entertainment district of Falcon City. This street, like its blatantly sexual name, was a place that presented the greatest pleasure to the users.

EL was an R-18 game. In the first place, Dream Network could only be accessed through a fingerprint sensor and a facial recognition, so there was no way minors were able to access EL.

With that being the case, adult contents in EL was very vivid.

Of course, there weren't any illegal contents, but there were some that went borderline illegal. It was just that adult-only Dream Network contents had restrictions on the duration of time it can be used per user per day so it was impossible to indefinitely live there.

Sanghyuk was also a man, so he naturally had experience with those adult contents as well. However, he didn't have a lot. He was just around average.

And today, he hadn't come here to enjoy adult content, but to acquire something.

'Where was the gambling den again...'

Sanghyuk was looking for one of the three famous spots(?) in Six-Nine street, the 'Falcon Casino'. After a little bit of time passed, Sanghyuk could enter Falcon Casino past some NPCs that had barely any clothing on.

The reason he was here?

That was simple.

The Ancient Knowledge he wanted could be gotten here.

Ancient Knowledge 'Card User'.

After upgrade and fusion, this would eventually become 'Card Master' and could only be gotten in this place



Card User.

It took a little time for the users to find out about this Ancient Knowledge. It was known to be shared among some users before that, but that didn't mean anything.

Just because an Ancient Knowledge was scarce didn't mean that it was good. Especially, something like 'Card User' was thought to be interesting by many users when it was known, but everyone shook their heads after its abilities were known.

It was no wonder since the Ancient Knowledge 'Card User' had no meaning just by itself.

The only Soul Skill that came with the Ancient Knowledge was called 'Card Fusion'. It sounded cool, but in fact, no one knew how to use that skill.

Of course, people found out how Card Fusion worked after a little time, but the problem was that it couldn't be utilized in any way even after it was known.

In the end, the Ancient Knowledge known as Card User was abandoned after being judged that it could not be used. There were quite a few Ancient Knowledge that were abandoned like this so it wasn't something of note either.

The one that revived it after 10 years was Sanghyuk.

Tap tap.

Sanghyuk lightly tapped on the cocktail twice and checked again. As soon as he entered the casino, Sanghyuk kept playing 'Seven Poker' that had the lowest minimum

bet.

Normally, people came to casinos in order to enjoy or to win some money, but Sanghyuk was playing for a completely different reason.

‘This one’s no good either.’

Sanghyuk flipped the cards over after checking the 5th card. The method to acquire the Ancient Knowledge Card User was to complete all possible hands through seven poker on the seven poker table.

To be exact, ‘one pair, two pairs, triple, straight, flush, full house, four cards, straight flush’ – a total of 8 hands had to be completed.

It looked easy at a glance, but it actually wasn’t. Seven poker wasn’t a popular game in the casino so there weren’t many users on the table either.

It wasn’t easy to complete all the possible hands in seven poker because of that. Especially in the case of four cards or straight flush.

Due to this reason, Sanghyuk was sitting on the seven poker table with the lowest minimum bets, betting the minimum amount of money, focusing on creating his cards.

In the first place, what Sanghyuk wanted wasn’t money but to create the 8 combinations so he daringly killed the cards once he judged that he couldn’t make the hands.

‘Phew, I only have the four cards and the straight flush left... but it sure doesn’t appear easily.’

It had been two days since Sanghyuk came to the casino, and he was sitting on the seven poker table whenever he wasn’t resting.

‘Well, they will appear eventually.’

Sanghyuk didn’t get hasty. This was a leisure that could only be found in people that knew exactly what they were doing.





‘The last card...’

Sanghyuk nervously flipped his 7th card.

An ace of hearts!

Sanghyuk nodded his head when he saw that.

‘Done.’

Four cards appeared 3 days ago, but he had to suffer because the straight flush didn’t appear for the past 3 days.

‘Has it been exactly a week now?’

Sanghyuk had sat inside the casino to the limits of what law allowed him and finally got the results he wanted.

After the betting was over, Sanghyuk showed all of his cards to the other people and they were surprised.

However, Sanghyuk was focused more on the system message that appeared in front of him rather than their reactions.

You are qualified to become a Card User.

You have fulfilled all the required conditions to acquire the Ancient Knowledge ‘Card User’.

Will you absorb the Ancient Knowledge ‘Card User’ into your second Soul Hole? Please decide within 5 minutes.

‘Absorb!’

Because there were people around, Sanghyuk shouted in his heart and nodded his head.

The Ancient Knowledge 'Card User' will be absorbed into the second Soul Hole.

You have '2' empty Soul Holes left.

The ancient Knowledge filled the empty hole in the soul, and Sanghyuk stood up from his seat with a satisfied smile. Since he had gotten everything he needed here, there was no need to stay here anymore.

Although he had lost quite some money during the past week, he didn't think it was a waste.

'Card User is the core of the Quadra Soul that I have thought of.'

The 'Crash' Choi Sangryul he raised in his past life was a Double Soul User. And the two Ancient Knowledge he had were 'Shadow Knight' and 'Card Master'.

Choi Sangryul was a player that was practically made by Sanghyuk, so he knew all the secrets that Choi Sangryul possessed.

That was why he could only equip 'Knight' and 'Card User' into his two Soul Holes first despite knowing that he still had two more.

Having left the casino without regrets, Sanghyuk opened his information window and checked the Ancient Knowledge 'Card User', that he had just gotten.

Ancient Knowledge 'Card User'

: The power of card experts, inherited from the ancient times, has seeped into your soul. Card experts can make the impossible possible through the means of cards. However, beware. This power cannot be manipulated easily...

Effects: Card creation [Can turn all things into cards.] Restore [Can restore all cards into their original state.] Card affinity (C) [Can utilize all card items with proficiency.]

Card Fusion [Special skill]

– Create something entirely new by combining 4 cards or more.

[Registered formulae : 0]

‘It’s the same.’

Card User was just as he knew it. Everything that Sanghyuk had planned for could be said to stem from this Card User.

In fact, Card User was a very characteristic Ancient Knowledge just at a glance.

The biggest ability of card users was of course Card creation. Almost anything that existed in EL could be turned into cards. Of course, the method of turning things into cards were different for each thing.

Normal items could be turned into cards as long as he possessed ownership of it, but living monsters or animals required various conditions in order to turn them into cards.

In any case, the important thing was that card creation required some tricks as well. The Restore technique was literally just turning the card into its original state.

For example, a rusted iron sword could be created into a card and could be restored into the rusted iron sword.

The only restriction to the items that turns into cards were that it was bound to the user the moment it was made into cards, so the items could no longer be traded anymore.

If it was possible to do so, perhaps Card User might have become the greatest Ancient Knowledge for merchants.

However, creating and restoring cards was an easy way to manage equipment if it was for himself alone.

The reason he didn’t buy the expensive, but useful ‘Spatial expansion bag’ was also because of this reason.

Just looking at that, the Ancient Knowledge ‘Card user’ felt like a run-of-the-mill

Ancient Knowledge that just allowed for easy carrying.

However, the true power of Card Users didn't lay in creating and restoring cards.

The sole Soul skill, Card Fusion.

This was the most OP skill in existence in EL.

The possible combinations of Card Fusion were limitless. Through Card Fusion, he could use all sorts of skills without limitation.

When Choi Sangryul was acknowledged as the strongest EL player, his opponents always reacted the same way.

'I couldn't find any weaknesses.'

Card Fusion is what Choi Sangryul used.

To be exact, it was the Card combination that was based on Sanghyuk's 'Heavenly Dragon Card Deck', but in any case, Choi Sangryul could rise to the top of EL with the power of Card Fusion.

Then why was the Card User abandoned by all users?

The reason was actually quite simple.

'It's because the card formulae were never revealed anywhere...'

Card formulae.

In the end, this was what mattered. At a glance, one might think 'finding formulae is easy, isn't it?' or something like that.

However, knowing the truth would render them speechless.

Four cards were needed to use the skill. On the other hand, practically all things in EL could be created into cards so the number of cards that can be used in the combination could be considered infinite.

If card combinations were so easily found, people would have challenged on, and perhaps the card formulae may have been shared among the users quite quickly.

However, card combinations weren't so easily completed.

Moreover, even if there was a successful combination, there were loads of combinations that resulted in trash. In fact, some card combinations exploded upon fusion and killed the user.

Not only that, the cards used in the fusion would disappear regardless of success or failure, so it was hard to try combining cards that were expensive to make.

With that being the case, the users couldn't try to combine cards so easily. There were many people that were rumored to become bankrupt after trying it.

Also, a success after numerous failures would make the user cherish it so they never shared the formulae with the others. Though, there were cases where they sold it for a higher price.

However, in the end, the number of users that chose to become a Card User decreased due to the inefficiency, and the people that researched into card combinations eventually died out as well.

Card Users were abandoned, so the card formulae disappeared, and more card users were abandoned... this cycle continued until there were practically no Card Users in EL.

The one that took Card User out the trash can was Sanghyuk. He thought that he had to gamble in order to rise again after becoming a cripple.

That was why he went with the Card User.

He gathered card combinations whenever possible while crawling in the pits for 7 years. He tried combining cards for himself by logging into the game with his pitiful VRA, and looked for useful combinations by gathering materials that others had given up on.

Since Sanghyuk's game intellect was considerably good, he had some results after toiling for 7 years.

That was the 'Heavenly Dragon Card Deck' that he had passed onto Choi Sangryul. The Heavenly Dragon Card Deck, with its 24 combinations of cards, brought a new wind to EL.

Simply put, it could be called the 'Card wave'.

Everyone struggled to become a Card Master like Choi Sangryul and the publicized card combinations rapidly increased.

However, there were no combinations that surpassed Sanghyuk's Heavenly Dragon Card Deck that he had completed after 7 years of research.

Actually, Sanghyuk used the publicized card combinations to create a card deck that surpassed the Heavenly Dragon Card Deck without anyone knowing.

Sanghyuk gathered all sorts of card formulae in case he was kicked out of Team SKY, and could achieve great results in a short time.

"That's how I completed the deck I will use in this life."

Muttered Sanghyuk with a smile.

He had already prepared the deck that he would use.

# Chapter 16

## Personal Streaming (1)

Having acquired everything he needed, Sanghyuk immediately left Six-Nine street. His instincts as a man did twitch a little, but this was no time to spend time on things like that, so he endured it and left.

Having left Six-Nine street, Sanghyuk moved towards the most populated part of Falcon City, the merchant district.

Sanghyuk kept picking up stones on his way and put it inside his bag. It was unknown why he did so, but he kept looking around for pebbles.

Having arrived at the merchant district, Sanghyuk checked the amount of gold in his possession and immediately went to the commissioned sales store.

Until now, Sanghyuk had visited the commissioned sales store to sell things, but this time he went there to buy things.

‘Tinge of fire and Blackstone powder.’

Reminding himself of the two items he needed to buy from the store, he immediately used the search system to find those items.

Tinges of fire was an alchemy ingredient that was relatively common. They could be found by killing Firelizards in the Heat-harboring Cave or digging Flameflowers.

They weren’t rare nor were they used in special things, so there were many in stock in the commissioned sales store.

Meanwhile, Blackstone powder was one of the many items that mages used and could be acquired through various means. However, since there were all sorts of mages in EL, there was quite a lot of demand for it as well.

Even so, he procured them without difficulty since the supply was quite large as well. In EL, NPCs also acquired items according to the users’ trends and sold them through

the commissioned sales store, so there weren't many things that were impossible to get just because there were no users supplying them.

Sanghyuk bought suitable amounts of Tinges of fire and Blackstone powder before leaving the commissioned sales store.

'Since I got the Tinges of fire and the Blackstone powder, all I have to get is the Methane gas from the sewers... That's the final ingredient.'

Methane gas from the sewers. This item was ridiculously easy to acquire once you know the trick but was insanely difficult if you didn't.

Sanghyuk first went to a biggest general store in Falcon City to buy a thousand bulk of blank cards. In Sanghyuk's previous life, these were called the 'empty cards', and the majority of users right now didn't know that such an item existed in the general stores.

Having bought 1,000 empty cards, Sanghyuk immediately went to his own secret dungeon, Falcon City 77th Sewer. Having entered the dungeon, Sanghyuk took out an empty card after going to one corner of the dungeon.

"People still don't know what these empty cards are."

It would take a lot of time for the other users to find out where these empty cards were used.

Sanghyuk focused with an empty card in hand. To be exact, he was imaging what would enter the empty card.

What Sanghyuk wanted was the endless methane gas that flowed out from the sewers. In other words, Sanghyuk was trying to put methane gas into the empty card.

Like this, empty cards were akin to empty dishes in which one could put something into. As long as one imagined in one's head well, it was possible to put something inside an empty card like this.

Sanghyuk put methane gas into 50 empty cards. When the methane gas was put inside the empty cards, the blank card produced a yellow-brown gas image as well as the text 'Methane gas(Warning: smell)'.

Sanghyuk acquired his methane gas cards like that. Then, he proceeded to make the



Tinges of fire and Blackstone powder into cards as well.

He acquired a total of 54 Tinges of fire cards and 50 Blackstone powder cards.

“What’s left is...”

Having completed 3 types of cards, Sanghyuk started making the pebbles he picked up on the way into cards. The trick was simple as well this time.

He just had to fuse the empty cards and the pebbles to make the pebble cards.

He got a total of 50 pebble cards.

With that, Sanghyuk had acquired a total of 4 types of cards.

The reason he made four different types of cards was simple.

These four types of cards were the variables of the first formula that he was creating.

“The most fundamental card formula from the Heavenly Dragon Card Deck, the ‘Flame stone’. The fact that the formula for the Flame stones was this was a secret that no one, no, only I and Choi Sangryul knew.”

Flame stones were basically similar to ‘fireballs’, one of the main magic that most battle-oriented mages specialized in.

To be exact, it was slightly weaker but was much more versatile to compensate. Anyway, this formula was one that Sanghyuk was going to use a lot in the future.

Actually, these cards were worthless when looking at them one by one. However, combining four worthless cards produced a strong means of attack.

“Card Fusion.”

Sanghyuk pulled out each of the four types of cards and quietly muttered ‘Card Fusion’. When he did, the four cards fused into one and a magic card that is known as ‘Flame stone’ appeared on his hand.

The card formula ‘Flame stone’ is registered to the Soul Skill ‘Card Fusion’.

There is a total of 1 formula registered in 'Card Fusion'.

Once registered, it was possible to fuse cards directly without pulling out the cards and just by possessing them.

Card Fusion technique required cards to activate, so it didn't consume anything else.

No MP, no HP, or anything else. It was just that using the cards continuously was impossible. All card combinations had a cooldown, so it was only possible to use the same card combination after that cooldown.

For example, the 'Flame stone' that Sanghyuk had just registered had a cooldown of 8 seconds. In other words, he could use a Flame stone card every 8 seconds.

Although it differed according to people, considering how Fireballs had 15 second cooldown time normally, Flame stones were extremely good.

He acquired the Ancient Knowledge, Card User, and also prepared enough 'Flame stones' as well. What he had to do now was to work hard to discover other contents first as well.

However, right now, he needed rest above all. Since he focused on seven poker until now in the casino with barely any sleep at all, he had to recharge himself here.

Since he didn't exercise much, he even felt his body was heavy.

'Let's log out first.'

Since he had almost filled the limit login time, he couldn't stay any longer either.

Sanghyuk first slept after logging out. As if to supplement the lack of sleep until now, he slept like a log for 5 hours until he was woken up by a loud alarm.

He wanted to sleep at least 10 hours more, but that would instead break his biorhythm, so he woke up after that.

After he woke up, he quickly took a shower and had a nutritional meal while looking for information online about EL as he always did.

‘There are no big issues... Oh!’

Just as he was about to close the window thinking there was nothing special, Sanghyuk made a surprised expression after seeing a small banner-like article on the side.

“Pu TV... How could I have forgotten about this.”

This was nothing like a big mistake. It was just that he felt that he was stupid for forgetting about Pu TV, which could be considered an aspect of the history of EL.

Pu TV, in a sense, was a personal internet streaming like Pafreeca TV. Of course, those two had their differences. If Pafreeca TV was acknowledged as the best personal streaming platform in the internet era, Pu TV was acknowledged as the best personal streaming platform in the Dream Network era.

Pu TV originally became famous through Fantasy Tekken streams and in Sanghyuk’s previous life as well, Pu TV switched their main contents to EL from Fantasy Tekken and became the single largest personal streaming platform.

“I remember. It’s around this time that Pu TV started offensively marketing EL.”

Although Pu TV had selected the right choice, there were many people that were worried about Pu TV’s daring decision.

Those people thought that it was better to invest in Fantasy Tekken since it was still popular.

‘Well, that would disappear in just half a year when it’s proven that Pu TV was right.’

Since he remembered, Sanghyuk entered the Dream Network and went to Pu TV. Although there were a lot of Fantasy Tekken streams on the main page, there were some EL-related streams that Pu TV had prepared on a special spot.

The difference between personal stream via Dream Network and personal streams via internet was like the difference between 2D and 4D. Obviously, Dream Network side was way better.

‘I can’t see any familiar names yet...’

Sanghyuk shook his head after looking at EL-related contents. It was true that it was

possible to get some pretty cash through personal streaming, but it also required publicizing many things, so it wasn't an area many people challenged yet.

Especially in the case of Sanghyuk, who had many secrets, he could never do something like livestreams easily.

'Instead, I should record my gameplay and put it on later.'

No matter how many important secrets he had, giving up the personal streaming was too much of a waste, so he had already thought up of a method to make his own channel work while hiding as many of his secrets as possible.

Once professional game broadcasting media like LGN(Live Game Net) started their channels later, he had to acquire a live channel from them. This was a different area from personal streaming, so it was hard to give up on. In any case, he had to raise his popularity and fame through personal streaming if he wanted a live channel later.

Sanghyuk clicked the most popular channel's BJ's name and watched it. Although this guy didn't bring out 100% of the fun, it was quite interesting to watch.

The stream was broadcasting the challenge of Falcon Sewers, where many parties were being created.

Sanghyuk switched the watching mode to the first person and started seeing what the BJ saw. Although 90% of the viewers chose to watch from the 'tower' view, Sanghyuk preferred the first person like this.

'You should have blocked and not dodged here.'

Although it wasn't like he was trying to find flaws, he could see too many mistakes from the BJ since he was in the first person view. The other viewers were busy complimenting the BJ's ability, but Sanghyuk considered this user to be just above average.

Of course, the BJ was also relatively under-evaluated since Sanghyuk had too high standards. Actually, objectively speaking, this BJ was enough to challenge becoming a pro gamer if he put some effort in.

Sanghyuk left after watching for around 15 minutes. He didn't have any reason to watch as users clashed against the Sewer dungeon.

‘It’s not like it’s a big deal if I don’t start my personal streams right away so let’s keep recording and gather some contents I can show later.’

EL supported many kinds of video recording software so he could film videos whenever he wanted. It was just that it was illegal to film other users without their permission so, not only would his account be banned if he tried to sneak someone’s face, he might have to deal with a lawsuit as well.

Since this kind of thing happened many times in other games until now, DN users were now cautious not to do that.

Having organized his thoughts about the personal streaming, Sanghyuk logged into EL.

‘I have enough stats and the stage is just about done, so should I go hunt that guy down?’

This was a target that Sanghyuk was aiming from the beginning. It was just that he had delayed in the challenge because he didn’t see any hope yet.

However, he couldn’t delay it forever. He didn’t know from when the users started paying attention to that place, so he had to suck out the juicy bits before they found out the good things.

# Chapter 17

## Personal Streaming (2)

There's a place called the Ancient Castle of Ghosts. It was the ruins of an ancient castle quite far away from Falcon City. Actually, it was closer to Minox, the next city after Falcon City where users would flock to, so it wasn't a well-known hunting zone yet.

The users were currently grading the many hunting fields in EL, and currently, the Ancient Castle of Ghosts was graded D.

The popular hunting fields like the Valley of the Dead was graded A and so-so hunting zones were graded B or C. Grade D and below were practically a place no one went to. To be exact, the Ancient Castle of Ghosts was the least popular hunting fields of the ones that the users have discovered thus far.

EL was a game with many hunting zones that were wide, so less popular hunting fields became even less popular as time went.

At least this kind of bad cycle continued until one important fact was revealed.

'Karma accumulation system. When was this known to the public again? It was so gradual that I don't remember the exact time.'

Karma accumulation system. This was a system that only applied to fields (and not dungeons), and thanks to this system, there was no longer an 'abandoned' hunting field in EL. Even after the number of users decreased in low-level zones, there were no hunting fields that were completely abandoned.

'Has it been around 3 weeks since Ancient Castle of Ghosts was discovered? This much should be enough for the accumulated karma to generate a karma singularity.'

What Sanghyuk aimed for was the 'karma singularity' that transformed the monsters and the field itself.

If the users did not periodically exterminate the respawning monsters, karma would accumulate in that region and would trigger a phenomenon known as the 'karma

singularity' after some time.

There were many stages to karma singularity, and right now was about the time between the first stage, 'bonus field generation' and the second stage, 'field boss appearance'.

If he waited any more time, his juicy jar of honey might be taken by other people so this was the perfect time to open the juicy jar of honey.

This Ancient Castle of Ghosts had a structure that went down underground in levels so even if a bonus field appeared, it would appear in the 7th or 8th floor below ground.

Sanghyuk knew about the karma singularity, but did not know who discovered the karma singularity that appeared in the Ancient Castle of Ghosts.

Even though he was someone who came to the past from the future, he couldn't know everything, so he had to take care of the things that he was unsure about.



"Being recording. Perspective, tower!"

Sanghyuk was planning to record videos of his gameplay whenever possible so he set the video recording on before he entered the castle.

\*Srrrr\*.

Having set the video recording on, Sanghyuk unsheathed his Traveller's Treasure Sword and slowly walked inside the Ancient Castle of Ghosts.

The monsters in the Ancient Castle of Ghosts were the skeleton series – skeleton soldier, archer, knight, and mage; and stronger skeletons would appear as he delved deeper.

The skeleton series appeared very frequently in various places of the planet of Treenark, so Sanghyuk also had a lot of experience in battling the skeleton series.

He even had numerous experience fighting the final boss of the skeleton series, the spartoi. Of course, the spartoi didn't appear in the Ancient Castle of Ghosts, but the skeleton series had similar battle patterns overall.

A single sword struck down with power. The sword, swung by a skeleton soldier with all its power, was pretty powerful.

However, Sanghyuk tilted his Traveller's Treasure Sword slightly to parry it. This kind of techniques were treated as basics later for any pro gamers, no, just average EL players in general.

However, that would only happen after 2 or 3 years.

No one, at the current point in time, knew that this was possible.

\*C-c-c-clang\*.

Having parried the skeleton soldier's sword lightly, Sanghyuk pushed the skeleton soldier with his body.

\*Thud! Drrrrrk.\*

The skeleton series fundamentally had low endurance so the skeleton soldier was pushed back from Sanghyuk's slam.

Having gained some distance with the slam, Sanghyuk quickly slashed out with his Traveller's Treasure Sword three times.

\*Pa-pa-pah\* – Triple Slash activated naturally. However, the angle of the blade was quite peculiar. Triple 'Slash' would usually slash with the blade, but Sanghyuk had twisted his grip on the sword to slash, no, smack, with the side of the blade.

\*Thud, th-th-thud!\*

Blunt weapons were much more effective to the skeleton series than the sharp weapons. He had to use a blunt weapon rather than a sword to fight them for real, but the Traveller's Treasure Sword had a high basic attack power, so it was much better to use that than some random blunt weapon.

Instead, Sanghyuk used his sword like a blunt weapon. Actually, it might sound easy, but it was definitely not easy to do for real. Especially changing a skill that has the word 'slash' in it to beat something up was normally considered impossible.



‘Beat! And they shall fall!’

Sanghyuk beat the skeleton soldiers with the basic mindset against the skeleton series and the skeleton soldier eventually fell with a shattered skull.

\*Crack, pshhh.\*

The moment the skeleton soldier fell down, Sanghyuk jumped to the side.

\*Swoooooosh, crack!\*

At that moment an arrow from a skeleton archer brushed past him and embedded itself on the wall.

He didn’t dodge it after seeing it, but with pure instinct. He did see that a skeleton archer was rising just before he smashed the head of the skeleton soldier, but he couldn’t exactly time when an arrow would come.

So he could only dodge intuitively.

Having dodged an arrow with intuition, Sanghyuk rolled on the ground once and drew throwing motion to the skeleton archer with his hand.

Card Fusion skill ‘Flame stone’!

\*Fwoosh, boooom!\*

The fusion card he had prepared beforehand activated and a flaming pebble shot into the head of the skeleton archer.

Sanghyuk had created 50 Flame stone cards before he came here. Of course, 50 wasn’t that many so he had to save up for later as well.

Since there were only 50 blackstone powder in the commissioned sales store, he could only create 50 flame stone cards, but blackstone powder wasn’t a scarce material so he would be able to acquire them later as well.

\*Crunch.\*

Flame stones were practically nightmares against the skeleton series so the skeleton archer immediately collapsed with its head shattered. This was also the reason Sanghyuk had prepared the Flame stones first.

He easily dealt with a skeleton soldier and instantly sniped a skeleton archer with a Flame stone. Both skeleton soldiers and skeleton archers had a relatively high level so other users would usually team up in at least two or more to hunt here.

However, Sanghyuk was hunting alone in the belief of his ability.

‘Ah, the respawn speed of bonus fields is frightening.’

Currently, Sanghyuk was 7 floors below ground level in the Ancient Castle of Ghosts. The Ancient Castle of Ghosts had a total of 8 underground floors, and the bonus field has currently appeared on the 7th floor thanks to the karma singularity.

Once a bonus field appeared, the karma from defeating monsters would increase by 20~30%, and the monsters dropped better quality items at a higher rate.

Bonus fields were maintained until a certain amount of monsters were defeated, so Sanghyuk was planning to hunt here until the bonus field completely disappear.

Actually, just considering the stats of the monsters, skeleton knights and skeleton mages were twice as difficult to kill than skeleton soldiers and skeleton archers. But in practice, there was not that much difference in difficulty.

The reason was simple. Skeleton soldiers and skeleton archers usually appeared in groups of 3~5, while skeleton knights and skeleton mages only appeared by themselves or at most 2.

So, in Sanghyuk’s shoes, both of them felt relatively equal in difficulty.

Actually, Sanghyuk’s method of battle was very simple. He would use his sword to melee the skeleton soldiers and skeleton knights and close in on the skeleton archers and skeleton mages if possible or just use a flame stone to obliterate them.

If someone saw Sanghyuk fighting, they may see it as a repetition of a simple pattern. However, a user with a considerable understanding of EL may be shocked.

There was not a single wasted movement and every movement was precise.

That was how Sanghyuk was hunting right now. It was just that absolutely no wasted movements made him look dull. Extreme efficiency resulted in simplicity after all.

Sanghyuk struck his Traveller's Treasure Sword into the ribs of a skeleton mage and kicked the sword upwards with his right foot.

\*Crack, crunch!\*

At that moment, the skeleton mage's ribs all shattered and its body swayed a lot. Having blasted all of its ribs out, Sanghyuk pulled out his sword and smashed it into the skull of the skeleton mage.

\*Crunch, craaaack!\*

The skeleton mage couldn't endure this strike after a big strike from the first. It tried to use some kind of magic to attack Sanghyuk the moment Sanghyuk closed in, but the problem was that Sanghyuk's follow up attack was much faster than the mage's reaction.

\*Thud.\*

With this skeleton mage, Sanghyuk had cleanly exterminated a batch of skeletons once more.

"Two skeleton knights and one skeleton mage does make it a lot more tricky."

"Although he was saying it was tricky, he had killed the three skeletons in a brief moment with precise judgements and movements as though he had done this hundreds of times already.

Actually, Sanghyuk shouldn't be currently hunting in this place.

A normal user at Sanghyuk's level would normally be limited to the field above the Ancient Castle of Ghosts or hunt skeleton soldiers that appeared by themselves on the first floor.

However, Sanghyuk lightly ignored those limitations and was hunting batches of skeletons in floor 7.

His practical experience from slaving away like a machine in the workshop for 5 years was synergizing with his theory that he had created in his directing days.

At first, the theory and the experience didn't properly combine together and he had some difficulties. However, with an endless amount of effort, Sanghyuk was currently reproducing 90% of the movements that he wanted.

"The blue light dimmed quite a lot."

Picking up a few miscellaneous items (*T/N: aka 'japtem'*) that the skeleton mage dropped, Sanghyuk felt that the blue light from the surroundings had dimmed quite a little bit.

Looks like the bonus field effect would disappear in 30 minutes. Then... I guess it's about time I go down now.'

If floor 7 was the bonus field of the karma singularity, floor 8 was the field boss of the karma singularity.

'If the field boss is really the same as what I think it is... I might be landing on a jackpot... but that won't happen right?'

Field boss appearance was purely random, so Sanghyuk didn't know what kind of boss was waiting for him.

It was just that he had one that he wished for it to come out among the skeleton-type filled boss monsters. There were 7 skeleton-type field boss monsters to his knowledge. So, the probability that he would get what he wanted was 1 in 7.

"Let's go!"

He had to strike the iron while it was hot, so he immediately went to floor 8. Of course, he inwardly wished that the field boss monster he wanted to appear would appear.

# Chapter 18

## Golden Skeleton Knight (1)

Sanghyuk could smile happily the moment he arrived on floor 8.

Golden light filled the entirety of floor 8.

He could only smile after looking at that.

‘It’s here! It’s actually here!’

There was usually one skeleton-type field boss monster that emitted such a glow.

“Golden Skeleton Knight!”

Also referred to as the ‘Golden Skeleton Lottery’, this was the guy that Sanghyuk wanted.

‘Although I did want for one to show up, to think it actually did...’

There were two reasons why Sanghyuk was so overjoyed. First was that the Golden Skeleton Knight had an element of ‘jackpot’ that nicknamed it the ‘Golden Skeleton Lottery’, Second, this guy was the easiest to face out of all the skeleton-type field-boss monsters.

Even Sanghyuk would have a hard time challenging field boss monsters at this point in time. However, his confidence would increase if he was facing off against the Golden Skeleton Knight.

Originally, Sanghyuk was planning to just check what the field boss monster was without fighting and prepare accordingly later.

However, if the opponent was the Golden Skeleton Knight, there was nothing much to prepare. Actually, his achievement of killing a field boss monster ‘for the first time’ may be stolen if he did so.

Of course, he had not heard of a witness of a field boss monster much less the killing of one, but the world was a mysterious place. What was a pity was that he only had 34 Flame stone cards left, but he didn't think that would cause an issue. He might have to reconsider if it was another field boss, but if it was the Golden Skeleton Knight... this was really like Sun Wukong on top of the Buddha's palm.

'But even so, the opponent is a boss monster that has to be fought in parties. I must not forget that I'm alone right now. Let's first go through the Golden Skeleton Knight walkthrough in my head.'

Before approaching the center of the golden light, Sanghyuk went over his things one last time.

'Its main skills are 'Golden Aura' and 'Golden Bolt', right?'

Once, the 'workshop' also hunted down these Golden Skeleton Knights countless times in pursuit of this jackpot. Even the lowest tier was hard to find since they were bosses after all, but the scale of the workshop that Sanghyuk was in topped the majority of large-scale guilds, so the number of Golden Skeleton Knights Sanghyuk had faced off against also numbered in the hundreds.

Since this guy had one of the lowest levels among field bosses, he could fight against it more than the others. Thanks to that experience, Sanghyuk knew about Golden Skeleton Knights quite well.

'Golden Aura is just like a personal buff for this guy, so there's nothing for me to do about here. The problem is the Golden Bolt... In the past, I could dodge them with my eyes closed thanks to experience, but can I do it now too?'

Golden Bolt, like its name, was a skill that dropped golden-colored lightning against the enemy. Of course, there was a pre-skill motion, so it wasn't impossible to dodge, but since the bolt fell down fast, he would get hit even if he was late in judgement by 1 or 2 seconds.

No matter how easy this guy was, the Golden Skeleton Knight was a monster that was made for party hunting so he might get killed instantly if he was hit squarely.

'Especially since I not only have a low level but a low defense and health as well, so I won't be able to survive even one of the Golden Bolts.'

The core of the plan was to not get hit by those Golden Bolts.

‘And I’m not sure about other things, but that guy should have high health since it’s a field boss monster, so I might need to fight for quite a long time.’

Having put together the guides he remembered, he summed it up to one line.

‘Dodge all the Golden Bolts perfectly and stack damage for quite a long time.’

It didn’t sound that hard, but making it a reality was something entirely different.

“I guess it’s like poking an elephant to death with a needle? No, wait, a needle is taking it too far, so I guess it’s around an awl? Anyway, I guess the important thing is to maintain my concentration for a long time.”

With that, he was finished organizing his thoughts. What was left was to challenge.

\*Tap tap!\*

Sanghyuk tapped his two cheeks with his hands to cheer himself up.

“Let’s do this!”

With a short shout, he proceeded forward.

The Golden Skeleton hunt began like that.



The Golden Bolt fell once every 10~20 seconds randomly. So it was impossible to measure the time between each bolt to dodge.

It could only be dodged by the seeing the Golden Skeleton’s pre-skill motion; when the two holes in its head moved towards above. Its size was around two times that of Sanghyuk, and it was not that big considering it was a boss, so the pre-skill motion wasn’t that noticeable either.

Furthermore, the bolts struck too fast so it was not easy to dodge them. If he followed

the walkthrough and went with a 5-man party, there was an easier way to dodge by switching between their positions, but that was simply impossible for Sanghyuk to do since he was just one man.

In the end, he could only avoid the Golden Bolts head on. And for 2 hours, too...

‘It’s here!’

When the skeleton’s head raised up again, Sanghyuk threw his body sideways immediately.

\*Flash, crrrrrrrackle!\*

Exactly one second after Sanghyuk moved away, a golden bolt of lightning fell onto where he stood before.

An uncountable number of bolts had fallen until now, and Sanghyuk had dodged them all.

He wasn’t just dodging them either. He rolled around the ground and put his hand towards the Golden Skeleton Knight.

\*Flash, thud!\*

Then, the Flame stone struck the Golden Skeleton Knight’s body as it showed an opening after using the Golden Bolt.

Sanghyuk was endlessly dealing damage to the Golden Skeleton Knight like this. He really felt like stabbing an elephant with an awl, but the fact was that the piled damage was affecting that elephant.

It was tremendously difficult to concentrate for 2 hours to dodge the Golden Bolts, but Sanghyuk, fortunately, regained his senses of fighting the Golden Skeleton Knights in his previous life and could avoid all the Golden Bolts without error.

‘I can see an end.’

Sanghyuk lightly nodded his head after seeing that the Golden Skeleton Knight was swaying more than before.



Although he hadn't acquired a skill that allowed him to see how much HP the Golden Skeleton Knight had, but going by the experiences in his past life, the Golden Skeleton Knight should be nearing its limits.

Of course, Sanghyuk's own stage, after rolling around the ground so many times while concentrating for the past two hours, was not that good either, but it was at least slightly better than the Golden Skeleton Knight.

'It's about time for its final struggle... '

Sanghyuk bit his lips after checking the Golden Skeleton Knight's position. For a while now, he was giving attention to the position of the Golden Skeleton Knight.

Although this was obvious, all boss monsters did not fight with just one pattern until its death. They had at least 2 patterns of fighting.

So, even the lowest-tier boss monster, the Golden Skeleton Knight, didn't just possess a single pattern. It possessed two patterns... and the second of them was the final struggle-type pattern that occurred just before it collapsed.

\*Clack clack clack clack clack.\*

As though it had read Sanghyuk's mind, the Golden Skeleton Knight suddenly moved its loose jawbones up and down. This made the golden aura about it start to dissipate.

'The second phase!'

Sanghyuk knew that this was the start of the Golden Skeleton Knight's second phase, so he immediately prepared inwardly for the 2nd pattern.

'One, two, here!'

\*Flash, pzzzzzzzzzzzt!\*

\*Bbbbbbbbbboooooom!\*

A strong storm of electricity poured out with the Golden Skeleton Knight as the center. That storm of electricity swiped to all directions clean.

This was the Golden Skeleton Knight's second pattern. Actually, this second pattern

was simple, in a certain sense.

To put it simply, it was just the Golden Skeleton Knight's final struggle before its death.

It did not do any basic attacks and did not use the Golden Bolts nor the Golden Aura. It didn't even move and stood still in its place.

It only did one thing – emitting a strong storm of electricity towards all sides at a 3-second interval. However, sometimes, simplicity was the scariest.

The golden electric storm that was released into the surroundings every 3 seconds wiped everything in its path. Even the strongest tankers of EL right now would be instantly annihilated in the face of this storm.

And this appeared every 3 seconds, so it was practically impossible to avoid.

Then would the users have to run or die out when the Golden Skeleton Knight turns to its second phase? Of course not.

Although he was unknown right now, the 'Ironman' Diffrom, later known as the greatest raid ranker, once said this.

'There does not exist a monster in EL that we cannot conquer. There are only those we have not found a solution to.'

Like what he said, the second phase of the Golden Skeleton Knight may seem impossible to conquer, but it was actually ridiculously easy once the walkthrough was known.

Since Sanghyuk had faced this thing hundreds of times in his previous life, he knew exactly what he had to do for this second phase.

So, he easily dodged the first round of golden electric storm. To be exact, he lay down on a pit on the ground and the electric storm brushed above him.

The important thing here was the pit that Sanghyuk was lying on. This pit was the most important point in hunting the Golden Skeleton Knight.

Strictly speaking, the one who created this pit, was not Sanghyuk but the Golden Skeleton Knight itself. To be exact, it was the Golden Bolts it threw out.

‘Again, one, two...’

\*Ta-ta-tap!\*

After the first round of the electric storm brushed past him, Sanghyuk immediately stood up from his pit and ran to the closest pit near him.

He had to move as soon as possible. Since the Golden Skeleton Knight released the electric storms every 3 seconds, Sanghyuk was only allowed 2 seconds to move.

‘It’s coming!’

\*Flash, pzzzzzzzzzzzzt!\*

\*Bbbbbbbbbbbbbbbboooooooooom!\*

An electric storm once again wiped across.

However, Sanghyuk was still completely intact. These pits that he was currently hiding in... were actually tightly knit together and lead to the Golden Skeleton Knight.

If he used these pits well, he would be able to safely move towards the Golden Skeleton Knight.

Needless to say, these pits weren’t created like that out of pure coincidence.

# Chapter 19

## Golden Skeleton Knight (2)

Sanghyuk was already preparing for the Golden Skeleton Knight's second phase when it was the first phase. He had utilized the Golden Bolts to create a piece of art on the floor.

In Sanghyuk's past, this was called the 'pitworking'. The better the pitworking, the easier it would be to overcome the Golden Skeleton Knight's second phase.

Of course, after the levels of the users rose, there were many cases where they just brute-forced the second phase, but that only came much later.

This was why Sanghyuk could calmly approach the boss with the web-like pits on the ground.

The Golden Skeleton Knight released an electric storm in all directions every 3 seconds, but could not do a single damage to Sanghyuk who was hiding in a pit.

Sanghyuk used these pits to approach the Golden Skeleton Knight, little by little. Since the Golden Skeleton Knight was already on its last breath, he just had to be careful about the electric storm and nothing else.

In fact, the Golden Skeleton Knight right now was immune to all long-range attacks, but was weak to melee. In other words, once he dealt a proper strike up close, then the Golden Skeleton Knight may fall.

Sanghyuk knew this fact through his numerous experiences in his previous life, so he had diligently pitworked these pits, and as a result, could approach right next to the boss.

Now, he just had to deal a proper strike to end this Golden Skeleton Knight hunt for real.

\*Flash, pzzzzzzzzzzt!\*

\*Bbbbbbooooooooooom!\*

After another round of electric storm brushed past, Sanghyuk immediately stood up and struck down with his Traveler's Treasure Sword to the Golden Skeleton Knight's foot.

\*Swooosh, crunch! Crrrrrack!\*

It didn't matter where he struck. The important thing was to just attack directly.

The crack that started from the foot that was pierced by the Traveler's Treasure Sword spread out to the whole body of the boss.

This was the end. The Golden Skeleton Knight had already reached its limit, so it was natural for it to not be able to endure any more damage.

\*Crumble\*

The Golden Skeleton Knight collapsed down into fragments.

This was the end of the over 2-hour-long battle between Sanghyuk and the Golden Skeleton Knight.

You have defeated the Field Boss monster 'Golden Skeleton Knight'.

You have hunted a Field Boss monster for the first time and achieved something that no Dimensional Traveler has yet to do. This will become your achievement and be eternally remembered.

You have acquired the unique-grade title [First Field Boss Hunter].

You have defeated the first Golden Skeleton Knight, and have received all 71 items that could be gotten from the Golden Skeleton Knight due to the first kill bonus.

Congratulations. The gathered karma has broken through the limit and you have leveled up.

He couldn't get tired of this kind of system messages no matter how many times he

heard them. He felt happy just by listening to them and nodded his head with a smile.

He was happy that he had acquired the 'First Field Boss Hunter' title, and was also very happy that he had acquired all 71 items through the first kill bonus.

First kill bonus.

This was a system that was only applied to named-tier monsters that were greater or equal to field bosses. To put it simply, killing the first named monster of its kind would give the killer all the items that could be gotten from that named monster.

There were no exceptions. The named monster just dropped every single possible loot.

Thanks to this system, all users of EL were very focused towards to the 'first' conquerers.

To understand it better, the Golden Skeleton Knight Sanghyuk just had defeated dropped an item called the 'Ten Millennia Goldbone', also known as the golden skeleton lottery, at a nearly 0.01% chance.

In other words, this could be gotten around once every 10,000 of these Golden Skeleton Knights, and killing it for the first time would give him this item at a 100% chance.

Like this, conquering a named monster first didn't just give you fame, but a lot of benefits as well.

'First kill is the best.'

Sanghyuk nodded his head while looking at the items piled up in front of him. Sanghyuk's dimensional expansion bag was too small, so he even had to make some into cards to carry them.



Sanghyuk had an uncountable number of profits through this hunt in the Ancient Castle of Ghosts. However, three big profits outshined others.

First up was the Golden Skeleton Knight's Ten Millennia Goldbone, which was basically a winning lottery.

Ten Millennia Goldbone, as its name suggested, was just a big piece of bone that was gold.

This was a crafting item, and making an item out of this would fix the item's grade to unique. After a lot of time, the number of unique items would increase in the market, but right now, there weren't even any rare items on the market not to mention unique.

The current situation was that magic grade items were being exchanged at a high price, so acquiring a unique grade item was a great feat.

The crafted items from the Ten Millennia Goldbone was famed to be very good in quality as well. Thanks to that, even after the users' general levels increased and there was no more meaning to killing Golden Skeleton Knights, numerous users still kept a lookout for these Golden Skeleton Knights.

Actually, the other items from the Golden Skeleton Knight weren't anything special. The only lottery was the Ten Millennia Goldbone. The drop rate of other items was just normal. Even the lowest after that had drop rate around 5%. The Ten Millennia Goldbone was just special.

Acquiring a Ten Millennia Goldbone was akin to winning a lottery in the game.

There were 24 types of items that could be made from this Ten Millennia Goldbone, and Sanghyuk had used around 10 out of those 24 in his previous life.

Of course, when he was using those items, there were many higher grade items on the market, so the Ten Millennia Goldbone crafts had become much cheaper.

At that time, he was using those items since he had to use a cheap, but still good quality equipment. However, what he could say for sure was that he was quite satisfied with them.

The second was the 'First Field Boss Hunter' title. The effects of this title were...

Title – 'First Field Boss Hunter'

Grade – Unique

Description – You have proven your strength by defeating a Field Boss Monster earlier

than anyone.

Effects – [Prefix: Attack power increases against field boss monsters] [Postfix: Defense increases against field boss monsters] [Constant effect: >Kneel!(A) : Critical hit rate increases by 7% and critical damage increases by 15% against field boss monsters<]

... as such. The unfortunate point was that the effects were limited to field bosses, but the basic effects were quite good and it was a title that would help Sanghyuk out a lot.

The final profit was the immense amount of karma after hogging the bonus field *and* the field boss.

Sanghyuk's current level was 37.

Until now, the highest-leveled user in EL known to the community was the Chinese user 'Zhang Ze', who had reached level 40 yesterday.

However, this man was a One-soul user. Sanghyuk's memory also didn't contain the information about a ranker named Zhang Ze. What this meant was that Zhang Ze was a clueless user that went with One-soul and was eventually left behind.

What was important was not Zhang Ze's future, but was that Sanghyuk had overcome the innate limit from being a Quadra-soul, and was almost keeping up with a One-soul user.

Other than that, there were quite a few useful items among the things the Golden Skeleton Knight had dropped. Sanghyuk left those useful items behind and commissioned all the other items. A few of the crafting materials he had made into cards were going to be used later, so he just put them in the bank.

Since Sanghyuk now properly walked on the path of the Card User, he would need a lot of gold in the future. Card Fusion was practically a skill that consumed money as fuel so he might go bankrupt if he combined cards here and there.

Of course, just because he had money didn't mean that he could store an infinite amount of cards.

The first fusion card that Sanghyuk had made before, the Flame stone, was a low-rank fusion card that had a 'cost' of 0, so he could infinitely store those card, but later, once



fusion cards appeared with 'costs', he had to possess or use fusion cards according to the calculation formulae of 'costs', the sole disadvantage of being a Card User.

Having commissioned all the useless items, Sanghyuk moved to the 41st street of Falcon City, also known as the Artisans' Street. This place had various workshops, and the one Sanghyuk was heading to was the most famous smithy of them all, named 'The Golden Anvil'.

The Golden Anvil was the largest smithy in all of Falcon City. To be exact, it was the biggest smithy in the 7 cities that were in the 'Land of Dusk', the beginner-level playing area.

The owner of The Golden Anvil was a dwarf named 'Tokan', who was also known as the Red Hammer.

Actually, Tokan wasn't just any ordinary NPC he could meet.

Although this backstory was unknown right now, he was actually the king of dwarves. As for why such a figure was running a smithy in Falcon City, that would be revealed through one of the main story quests later.

Main story quests, unlike the common sub-quests, were unique and important quests, so Sanghyuk also knew the details.

In any case, it wouldn't make any sense for Sanghyuk, who had just peeled the beginner badge off him, to meet this Tokan.

EL's familiarity system was very dynamically related to each other so he had to raise his familiarity with another NPC or a group of NPCs before meeting Tokan.

This process was definitely not easy. This was why some users in Sanghyuk's previous life said that it was harder to raise familiarity with high-ranked NPCs than raising levels in the hell zone.

Especially with special NPCs like Tokan, just meeting him required a ridiculously complex process.

To put it simply, it was basically saying 'Put in some effort if you want to meet the king!'.

‘However, I currently have a cheat key that will allow me to meet Tokan in one go.’

The cheat key that could skip all that process and allow him to meet Tokan directly... was, of course, the Ten Millennia Goldbone.



“Ooooooh.”

Tokan picked up the Ten Millennia Goldbone with a blissful face. He seemed already enchanted by the Ten Millennia Goldbone.

It was a well-known fact that Tokan was in love with the Ten Millennia Goldbone in Sanghyuk’s previous life. And it was also known that it was possible to meet him directly with the Ten Millennia Goldbone.

Tokan had a background setting that he really loved ‘gold’, so it was natural for him to be charmed by the golden bone.

The Ten Millennia Goldbone was especially a high-quality item, so Tokan could not help but want to make something with this material. It was like an instinct for dwarves.

“Ehem, so you have quite an interesting item.”

Tokan pretended to be calm, but Sanghyuk already knew that he had fallen in love with this Ten Millennia Goldbone.

“I acquired it due to chance. I thought of Sir Tokan as soon as I acquired it. Who else, other than the great artisan of the race of the land, and the successor of the flame spirit, Sir Tokan, could use it?”

Sanghyuk utilized all the information he knew in order to flatter him.

NPCs of EL couldn’t just be considered as simple computer programs. Although not completely perfect, they were state-of-the-art artificial intelligence that had similar thought processes as humans. Especially in the case of special NPCs like Tokan, they had greater artificial intelligence.

So, the NPCs liked to hear flattery as well. Of course, different NPCs had different

preferences, so not all of them liked to be flattered, but most of the time, this would work.

Especially in the case of Tokan, he was weak to flattery unlike what he looked like, so Sanghyuk's approach definitely did work.

"Hahahaha, that's true. I'm not sure about anything else, but I can make use of this better than anyone else in the world!"

Feeling better, Tokan smiled and nodded his head continuously.

The Red Hammer Tokan's mood has risen.

Familiarity with Tokan increases by a large amount.

The familiarity that rose from the moment he took out the Ten Millennia Goldbone rose once again by a large amount. The Ten Millennia Goldbone was an OP cheat key in regards to Tokan.

"So, what do you want to make? A sword? Armor? Shield? Spear? Say anything. I'll make you a great one."

Sudden quest 'Toku's Good Will' has activated.

Before Sanghyuk could say it, Tokan asked him first about what to make and that triggered a sudden quest. Really, everything was going in Sanghyuk's favor.

"I..."

Sanghyuk had already thought of what to make with the Ten Millennia Goldbone before he had come here. The item that was most necessary for him and had great performance that was made out of Ten Millennia Goldbone... Making *that* out of the Ten Millennia Goldbone was a great choice.

# Chapter 20

## Firehammer Tokan (1)

Sanghyuk's explanation went on for a long time. This couldn't be helped since the item he wanted couldn't be described in just a single line.

"...And that's it. That's what I want."

When Sanghyuk finished his explanation, Tokan nodded his head with a very interested smile.

Tokan is feeling a big interest towards the item you have just described. You have satisfied the first clear condition of the sudden quest 'Tokan's Request'.

Familiarity with Tokan increases by a large amount.

"Oho, that sounds interesting. What do you call this?"

"I call this the bone whip."

"Cut the Ten Millennia Goldbone into around 400 small pieces and gather them up to make a whip... it sounds peculiar, but it does sound reasonable."

Tokan has gained realization after listening to your opinion.

You have satisfied the second clear condition of the sudden quest 'Tokan's Request'.

Familiarity with Tokan increases by a large amount.

'It's because you will definitely have interest in the bone whip.'

Sanghyuk smiled a little while looking at Tokan, who was nodding his head in front of

him. Actually, he was cheating right now.

This bone whip that Sanghyuk had just mentioned was the item that would win the grand prize in the 'Golden Anvil's Experimental Product', a large-scale event for the users that occurred much later into the game.

Sanghyuk had heard that the Red Hammer Tokan had praised this item to the extremes. After that, the bone whip was selected as an official production item of Golden Anvil and the users could use it as well.

The user that submitted the bone whip in the event was a user that possessed Ancient Knowledge regarding production, and he became well-known after the competition.

In any case, thanks to that user, Sanghyuk also had experience using the bone whip produced in the Golden Anvil, and he liked it a lot.

After considering many elements, Sanghyuk judged that it would best for him to make a bone whip from the Ten Millennia Goldbone, and explained it to Tokan.

And Tokan, as he had expected, took the bait.

Although he had to feel sorry for taking someone else's idea, the important thing was, that user was one of the people that betrayed Sanghyuk. Sanghyuk had taken out the bone whip in order to screw that guy up and bring Tokan to his side.

This could be considered as two birds with one stone scenario.

In his previous life, Sanghyuk didn't use the bone whip as his main weapon. At that time, he was already used to another weapon, so he didn't think about utilizing a new weapon.

Even so, he had heard rumors about how good it was and tried it, took a liking to it and used it as his 5th main weapon.

"Yes, that's it. Ten Millennia Goldbone can be made soft depending on how you polish it. Cutting the Ten Millennia Goldbone into small fragments and connecting them together may bring out an amazing weapon."

Tokan was muttering praises to himself endlessly. And every time he did so, Sanghyuk could hear a message that his familiarity with him rose slightly.

“Good! I’ll make this bone whip. I’ll make it more perfect than you think so just wait.”

After pondering, Tokan spoke with a very excited face. However, Sanghyuk still had a card left.

“I... also have another suggestion.”

“Hm? A suggestion?”

“Yes, this may benefit not only you, Sir Tokan, but all the members of the Golden Anvil.”

“Oho... really? Let me hear it then.”

With a low familiarity he couldn’t have taken out anything like a suggestion, but this wasn’t the case now. Since he had raised the familiarity as high as possible, Tokan listened to Sanghyuk’s request.

“Why don’t we make this bone whip an exclusive product of the Golden Anvil? I’ll only take 7% royalty as the idea maker.”

In Sanghyuk’s knowledge, the user that came up with the bone whip in his previous life received a 10% royalty. However, that was a value that user had gained after meticulous negotiation on top of the event grand prize effect. So, Sanghyuk was just going to lower the percentage and get things over with simply. This was the card Sanghyuk had saved up until now.

“Hmm, 5%.”

Although he had raised a lot of familiarity, Tokan did not nod his head easily.

“6%.”

Sanghyuk wasn’t planning to drag on for long so he just decreased his profit.

“Good! Let’s do it that way.”

The negotiation came to a quick end. With that, Sanghyuk could receive 6% of the profit that was made from selling bone whips from the Golden Anvil. Although this didn’t seem like much, once all sorts of users carried around a whip later due to popularity, Sanghyuk would be able to earn a big sum.

Of course, right now, the users wouldn't even have enough money to buy an expensive bone whip (Even without being made from a Ten Millennia Goldbone, bone whips were in the expensive category among weapons), but once the users gathered enough money and the performance of the bone whip was known to the public, it would definitely be a hit among the users.

You have become a helpful person to Tokan and the Golden Anvil.

You have satisfied the third clear condition of the sudden quest 'Toka's Request'.

Congratulations. You have cleared the sudden quest 'Toka's Request', and acquired the rare-grade title 'Friend of the Race of the Land' as a reward.

Your familiarity with Tokan has reached max!

A 'ring of fate' has manifested between The Firehammer Tokan and the dimensional traveler Immortal.

You have acquired a rare-grade title 'Friend of the King(Dwarf)' by manifesting a ring of fate with the legendary-grade NPC, 'Firehammer Tokan'.

'Yes!'

Sanghyuk was greatly delighted after seeing the message. Not to mention manifesting a ring of fate with Tokan, he had cleared the sudden quest as well.

Making a ring of fate with the king of the Race of the Land, typically known as dwarves, Tokan, was an arduous and important process that was more difficult than acquiring a legendary-grade item.

Of course, the familiarity system wouldn't just end with the ring of fate. EL's familiarity system was complex to the point that people often said that the familiarity process just started after the ring of fate manifested.

'Throne of the Four Guardians of the Cardinal directions... and the Heavenly Origin Throne... Can I really take that place? Although it's just a possibility now, in any case, this will be the start.'

What Sanghyuk ultimately wanted was a jaw-droppingly amazing matter. However, he had many things to do to achieve that.

He had just taken the first step by manifesting a ring of fate with Tokan.

Title – ‘Friend of the Race of the Land’

Grade – Rare

Description – You have shown trust towards to the Race of the Land. All beings of the Race of the Land will feel good will towards you.

Effect – [Prefix: N/A] [Postfix: N/A] [Constant effect: I can smell iron?(A) : You emit a fragrance that all dwarf NPCs like and brings out their good will. Familiarity increase rate increases by 2 times.]

Title – ‘Friend of the King(Dwarf)’

Grade – Rare

Description – The King of the Race of the Land has acknowledged you as a friend. Your reputation spreads among the Race of the Land

Effect – [Prefix: N/A] [Postfix: N/A] [Constant effect: I am this kind of guy!(A) : You can access all dwarf domains without any condition and can purchase items sold by dwarves at a 10% discount.]

After checking the two titles quickly, Sanghyuk made a satisfied smile. Although both of them were lifestyle-type titles, they had what Sanghyuk wanted on it.

“Ahahaha! Today is a good day. Why don’t we go out for a pint of Hinte beer?”

Tokan asked Sanghyuk with a good laugh. Hinte beer was definitely not wrong. EL contained quite a lot, no, a ridiculous amount of PPL (Product placement) inside it.

Hinte beer was one of those PPL. Actually, the unique taste of Hinte beer was also fully implemented as well. (*T/N: Hinte = HiteJinro, a Korean beer company*)



Actually, the race known as alcohol lovers, dwarves, drinking mass-produced beer like Hinte beer was quite strange. However, no one could say anything since they had to agree to the terms & conditions where it said that they had to acknowledge all PPL contents in EL.

Sanghyuk could only leave the Golden Anvil after two barrels of Hinte beer with Tokan. Since he had limited the drunkenness in the settings, he wasn't drunk, but his hunger value went beyond 100% and reach 130%, so he got a 'too full' debuff instead.

This wasn't a problematic debuff. It would decrease the movement speed and HP recovery rate by a little, but this was more of a prank than anything.

Having logged out of EL, Sanghyuk checked the video he had filmed in the Ancient Castle of Ghosts. Although he wasn't going to reveal the footage immediately, he was planning to edit it a little beforehand.

However, Sanghyuk realized that he did not need any editing the moment he watched the footage.

"Damn... this is really not fun even when I look at it. Whew, was my fighting style so boring?"

Sanghyuk could only make a bitter smile while looking at his own fighting footage as a third person.

It was definitely a footage that would make people exclaim at some points, but in the views of ordinary viewers, it was a sigh-inducing video.

'Looks like I'll have to give up on fighting footage for a while.'

Having watched all the footage he had recorded with fast-forwarding, Sanghyuk judged that it was impossible to gain the interest of other people right now.

Of course, the fact that he solo-played in a situation where he had to party was an element of interest, but the battle was too machine-like even after considering that.

Especially, if he butchered the footage to hide his secrets, it would become even more uninteresting.

‘Looks like I’ll have to give personal streaming another thought.’

No matter how much he wanted the personal streaming, he had more important things to do right now, so it would be a wise choice to delay the personal streaming a little.

‘Let’s think about it after I sleep a little.’

Sanghyuk had been logged on from the Ancient Castle of Ghosts to the Golden Anvil for 17 hours, so he was quite tired. He lied down on the mattress and fell asleep in 1 minute.

Since he had gained many things today, he felt that it would be good to sleep for 5 hours.

# Chapter 21

## Firehammer Tokan (2)

Perhaps his fatigue had piled over time, but Sanghyuk had slept for 7 hours when he intended to sleep for 5. As soon as he woke up, he took a shower first and warmed up his body by stretching.

Although he overslept by 2 hours, he wasn't in such a hurry. Being hasty to log into EL just because he had overslept was not his way of doing things.

Oversleeping was just oversleeping. He did everything independent of that fact. He exercised lightly to warm up his body and had a full meal as well. Since he only had one or two meals per day, he had to eat properly when he did.

Only after preparing himself like that, he did enter to the capsule.

Having entered EL, Sanghyuk didn't immediately go to the Golden Anvil and first stopped by the commissioned sales store. Since the items he had put on sale on the commission was considerably good at this point in the game, everything was sold out.

Sanghyuk paid the fee and checked the time after he received the gold.

'It will take a couple of days for the bone whip to be completed so should I put the sewer dungeon up for sale?'

Rumors about secret dungeons were starting to spread among the users. The exact truth was still unknown, but the fact that there were things called 'secret dungeons' and how they were juicy hunting zones were starting to spread.

This was the best time to sell his secret dungeon.

Dungeon trading was done in many ways, and the safest way was to do it through commission or through auction. Since no one put up a dungeon for sale, they just didn't know that it was possible to do so.

If he put up the 77th Sewer dungeon up for sale, then an item named 'D-rank secret dungeon 50/150' would appear in the commissioned sales store.

The details about the dungeon would be revealed according to how much Sanghyuk wanted to reveal about it. Right now, even if he put all details secret, there would be a lot of users interested in just from the fact that it was a secret dungeon.

The commissioned sales store fundamentally guaranteed the safety of all transactions. So the actual transaction of the dungeon was done in a manner so that it had to happen.

In other words, whether it was Sanghyuk, the seller in this case, or the buyer, they could be at ease if they traded through the commissioned sales.

Sanghyuk hunted lightly around Falcon City after putting his sewer dungeon on sale. After around an hour, a trade request message came to him from the commissioned sales store.

A pitch-black metallic armor that covered the entire body... it looked very crude, but it was a full set.

And this person was wearing a black robe on top as well, so not to mention face, even the hair couldn't be seen.

'Man, this guy looks very stifling.'

In front of Sanghyuk was the user that requested to buy the secret dungeon from him. The figure wasn't that big, but the problem was the attire.

No matter how high defense metallic armors were, there was nobody that wore full body armors like this. On top of that, wearing a black robe showed the extremes of stifling fashion. It felt like this user was trapped in the metallic armor.

But that wasn't the end.

[Can I receive it immediately?]

A message came instead of words. Surprisingly, this user was conversing through public message instead of words. Although he could see it in Korean due to the instant

translation, it could be seen that this user was someone who used English.

‘Whew, type-talking?... No one uses type-talking in Dream Network after the instant translation was nearly perfected... this is one peculiar user... Oh! Black metallic armor over the whole body and the type-talking. Is it the ‘Dark Knight’?’

Two words flashed by Sanghyuk’s head. Although he didn’t think of this when he just saw the armor, he remembered the words ‘Dark Knight’ when that user talked by typing.

‘Is it the same Dark Knight I know of?’

Sanghyuk scanned the opponent once again.

The Dark Knight seemed to have a height around 170 cm, and considering how the full set of plate armor covered the body, the figure didn’t seem to be that tall. A very large black shield as well as trying to conversing through type-messaging... this all seem to correspond to what Sanghyuk knew about the Dark Knight.

[Mr. seller?]

“Oh! I’m sorry. I can proceed with the transaction right away. It’s just that you need to have above ‘close friends’ familiarity with the Falcon Security.”

[I am already.]

The buyer, no, the user that could possibly be the Dark Knight answered curtly.

“That’s good, then please follow me.”

First, Sanghyuk took the Dark Knight to the basement of Falcon Security office. He kept thinking about what he knew of the Dark Knight on the way.

‘Once known as the greatest tanker of the beginning stages of EL... but became a legend by disappearing after the first large-scale patch, ‘The Rise of the Dead’ and the 2nd planet, Tume, was added... The impact the Dark Knight showed in the 2 years was so large that it was a talk for a long time even after the disappearance.’

Although Sanghyuk was completely unrelated, he knew quite a lot since the user was very controversial.

‘Is it really the Dark Knight? From what I’ve seen, it’s very likely...’

Thinking about various things, he arrived at the sewer dungeon quite soon.

‘Should I check if it’s the real Dark Knight?’

Sanghyuk liked being sure about things and wanted to check if the opponent was actually the Dark Knight. That was why he threw a question that wasn’t on his plan before he sold off the dungeon.

“Are you alone?”

[Yes.]

“The recommended party is 3... But will you be fine?”

[Is it hard?]

“It’s not too hard, but there are some tricky bits.”

Even though he easily cleared the same dungeon 100 times, he tried to scare the other party. Of course, he wasn’t entirely lying. It was because it was Sanghyuk that the clear was so easy. Normally, any user would have a hard time conquering it alone.

Having put on the bait, Sanghyuk immediately spoke when the other didn’t reply.

“If you so wish, I can tell you the tricks while running the dungeon around 10 times. But, it won’t be for free.”

Checking if the opponent was the Dark Knight and dungeon-carrying were separate matters, so he had to receive money.

[Can’t you just do one?]

The buyer put up the message after some time.

‘Confident in your ability? Well, I only need to check if you are the Dark Knight.’

“Okay then.”

Since he had another objective anyway, running the dungeon once didn't really matter.

'But is it the real Dark Knight?'

Sanghyuk peeked back while registering the buyer in the 77th sewer dungeon. This would all be solved if he entered the dungeon along with the buyer.

Sanghyuk knew of a trait that was more characteristic to the Dark Knight other than the type-talking or the outer appearance, so he just needed to look for that.



The Dark Knight was heavily silent to the point that the nickname 'Silent Tank' was given. The Dark Knight always put up a message when it was absolutely necessary.

Perhaps it could be considered very stifling, but it wasn't that much so when playing in a party. The reason was... the easily understandable hand signs as well as the ability to fulfill the role of a tanker at 120% efficiency.

The Dark Knight raised a hand and pointed forward with three fingers. Then rushed forward without any hesitation.

With a huge tower shield enough to cover all of the body, a charge was thrown towards the monsters.

\*Clang clang clang\*, despite the small figure, a strong power surged forth, and the three monsters at the front were all pushed backward.

Like that, the Dark Knight started beating the monsters to death with the shield.

\*Bang bang, crunch! Crunch!\*

With the shield, the monsters were literally made into bloody pulp. The Dark Knight definitely wasn't ordinary.

Sanghyuk nodded his head while watching. He didn't need to check anymore.

'Unique hand signs and Shield Charge techniques... with this, there's 99% chance of that he's the Dark Knight.'

All information pointed that the user in front of him was indeed the Dark Knight.

‘I don’t think his level is high, or his equipment is any good... but that’s pretty good. Oho, is that shield parry something he learned naturally? The rumors I’ve heard definitely aren’t exaggerated.’

Sanghyuk was surprised after looking at the Dark Knight fighting. He had seen many pro gamers up close in his life as a director. He also looked at the gameplay of promising amateurs as well.

Since he did, he had the confidence to judge another user better than anyone in EL.

‘He’s using the shield as if it was a part of his body. I don’t think his talent has blossomed yet... but he might become a better player than the ‘Adamantine Wall’ Qing Yuan or ‘Mr. Perfect’ Ivan.’

Qing Yuan and Ivan were two of the best tankers he knew of. Their performance was quite special even among the highest-ranking people, but from what he saw, the Dark Knight had a potential that surpassed those two.

When Sanghyuk told the Dark Knight the characteristics and walkthrough of the 77th sewer dungeon, the Dark Knight would, in turn, edit the walkthrough to fit the situation.

Just from that, the potential the Dark Knight had as a player could be seen. In the end, the Dark Knight perfectly cleared the 77th sewer quite soon. Considering how Sanghyuk only spoke of the walkthrough and the warnings and did not participate in the actual battle, the Dark Knight practically cleared the dungeon solo.

[Thank you.]

After clearing the dungeon, the Dark Knight gave him the compensation and nodded.

“You’re welcome.”

Sanghyuk looked at the Dark Knight after accepting the money.

‘Why did he quit the game after 2 years? I heard he was a faithful user that always kept his promise and never let allies down... , just what could have happened?’



Even though they just went around a dungeon together once, Sanghyuk liked the Dark Knight quite a lot – the sturdy gameplay style as well as the tremendous potential.

Although he had returned in time and was now trying to become a ‘main character’ that attracts all attention and not just a side character like the director, Sanghyuk was still very greedy for good players, something which he generated when he was a director.

‘I won’t make a loss by knowing him so I’ll leave a connection behind.’

“Can we register as friends?”

[Yes.]

At Sanghyuk’s sudden request, the Dark Knight seemed to ponder a little before replying with a nod.

“Nice to meet you. I’m called Immortal.”

Sanghyuk put his right hand forward while mentioning his name and the Dark Knight accepted his handshake without a word. Mentioning one’s name and offering a handshake was the process of requesting friends. Accepting the handshake was the accepting as a friend.

The Dark Knight, no, ‘Aspice’, was added to Sanghyuk’s empty friends list. Of course, the Dark Knight would also get the name ‘Immortal’ in the empty friends list as well.

“Let’s see each other again when we have the opportunity.”

Although they became friends, it wasn’t like Sanghyuk had something that he wanted from the Dark Knight. He was just purely impressed at the Dark Knight’s performance.

Separating from the Dark Knight, Sanghyuk thought up of something and logged out for a moment. Although he logged out of the game, this didn’t mean that he was logged out from the Dream Network.

He searched for a few pieces of information inside his D-room.

‘Byungil shouldn’t have started the game yet... so, do I need to just look for Jungwoo and Jungsoo? But I heard these two were complete wimps when they began...’

The ones Sanghyuk was looking for were those he could call 'friends' in his previous life. To be exact, they were the ones who helped him out until the end without betraying him. It was a sad thing that he could only believe 3 people in his long gameplay of EL, but it was fortunate that there were any at all.

Sanghyuk knew that it was a lot more painful when he was betrayed by someone close to him than some complete stranger so he couldn't make any friends after some time.

Sanghyuk searched for a while for any traces of Kim Jungwoo and Kim Jungsoo. They were twins. Actually, the two just had an ordinary talent for gaming and became rankers through sheer effort.

Sanghyuk looked for the two for quite a while, but couldn't find any traces of them.

'Well, these two did become rankers through effort alone, so it would take some time for them to become famous.'

He wanted to help them if he could find them, but the problem was that he couldn't find them. He knew their IDs, but EL allowed multiple of the same account name, so it was near impossible to find a person through their ID. Moreover, requesting friends was also only possible through meeting the opponent and shaking hands while mentioning one's name, so he could do practically nothing with just an ID.

'Looks like you two will have to suffer again in this life.'

Sanghyuk wished for the good luck for Jungwoo and Jungsoo who would be suffering in some part of EL before stopping his search.

Instead, he searched about a few guilds and users he remembered. The guilds and users he was looking up right now were not colleagues but targets of revenge.

"So 'Gold Rush' is so active even at the beginning. Those f\*ckers... they're probably threatening little kids in a not well-ventilated basement to work."

Muttered Sanghyuk after he found traces of Gold Rush in various places.

Gold Rush was the guild the managers of the workshop that made him a cripple after making him work for 5 years, had made. Of course, they were disguised as normal guilds on the outside, but they were actually a trash guild that grew with the insane production ability of the workshop as the foundation.

‘I’ll just be watching since it isn’t time yet, but I’ll shred you to pieces after you become fat!’

Crunch, Sanghyuk gritted his teeth and clenched his fist.

After that, Sanghyuk looked up various other powers and users that made him taste the bitter aspects of reality. There were some that turned up, and some that didn’t.

‘Phew, looks like I had a hard life. I was also like some of the wimps in my previous life...’

Kind, nice, pure – he had no thoughts in wrapping himself to look like that.

He just thought that he was foolish and idiotic.

Actually, that was true. Sanghyuk was always on the losing end because he didn’t know the cruelty of reality. Although he did gain success as a director later, he was betrayed yet again.

‘I will not believe in anyone, anymore. Justice? Friendship? Those have long been disappeared from my head. Now, I will only believe in myself.’

Sanghyuk stood up quietly after closing all the search windows in front of him. He could check that one thing was sure after searching his ties with good people and bad people.

It was that... he had a lot more debt to receive than to pay.

# Chapter 22

## The Third Ancient Knowledge (1)

Two days later, Sanghyuk received a message that the bone whip he wished for had been completed. It was the bone whip personally made by the greatest smith, the 'Firehammer' Tokan.

And since this was made from the best material, the Ten Millennia Goldbone, he could look forward to it even more.

Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip [Unique++]

– A special weapon made by the greatest smith using the greatest materials. It looks even more special thanks to the fact that the smith's abilities were used to the maximum. Also, the value can also increase more since it's the first of its kind.

[Basic stats] Attack power 150(+30), Critical hit rate +20(+4)%

[Special stats] Critical hit damage + 50(+10%), all stats +10(+2)

[Special effects] > It doesn't snap(A): Durability increases by 20 times. <, > It's better than spider strings(A): Can latch onto an opponent stronger. <, > Hit me more(B): Can present the greatest bliss towards a being with peculiar preferences. <

[Bonus effect] (1) Movement speed +5%, (2) Agility +12.

"Wow..."

The moment he checked the bone whip given to him by Tokan, he subconsciously exclaimed. A unique-grade item, no to be exact, a double plus (++) unique grade Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip had great performance.

A '+' sign on an item grade usually meant that it had a special history or reason for it. In this case, there was one plus from the masterpiece craft bonus from Tokan using

more than 100% of his ability, and another plus from the first creation bonus.

One plus meant a 10% addition to item's basic stats and special stats. In other words, a double plus, like in this case, meant a 20% increase in the bone whip's basic and special stats. The number within the () brackets were the additional stats.

Not only that, every plus came with a bonus effect.

'This is almost an e(elite)-unique item.'

Items with an e on the front of its grade had an unbelievably higher stats than the same grade. Elite-grade items could normally be acquired through special quests or raids, and naturally, it wasn't so common.

"How is it, isn't it good?"

Tokan asked Sanghyuk with full confidence.

"Yes, It's really good. Thank you so much for making such an amazing item."

"Hehe, I made that for two days and two nights. I can claim that it's better than any other item I made recently."

A masterpiece by a master artisan such as Tokan was identical to a divine product in the eyes of ordinary artisans. No matter how godly a double plus divine product was, the difference between an ordinary artisan and a master artisan was big, so they could be considered similar.

"And I decided to make the mass-produced bone whips with soft iron. Although not as good as the Ten Millennia Goldbone, it's a very soft metal so it should suffice for the bone whip. Of course, the price of the bone whip would be expensive one due to the high cost of the soft iron, but special items must be traded at a special price."

This was exactly like how Sanghyuk knew. In his previous life, the mass-produced bone whips were made of soft iron as well.

"Thank you for your consideration."

"Nah, it's a mutual benefit."

Sanghyuk conversed with Tokan and spoke the words he had prepared. Since he had already made the ring of fate with Tokan, it was very likely that what he was going to say might work.

However, he had to be safe than sorry, so Sanghyuk conversed with Tokan while waiting for the best opportunity.

“...In the end, the most important thing is the power of fire and the power of earth! That’s why we are always near a fire elemental and an earth elemental.”

The words Sanghyuk had been waiting for had finally popped out of Tokan’s mouth.

‘Now!’

“The fire elemental and the earth elemental... if it’s not so rude to you, do you know of a way I can get close to them?”

“Why, do you want to learn the hammer?”

“Oh, no. Not that much, but I do have an interest in elementals, also called the providence of mother nature.”

“Really? Hmm... if you want to know about elementals then go to Vaize. Oh, that secretive loner won’t just meet anyone, so I’ll write you a letter of recommendation.

Sudden quest ‘Toka’s Recommendation Letter’ has been generated.

‘Yes!’

The ‘Seeker’ Vaize. Another reason Sanghyuk had raised his familiarity with Tokan was that he wanted to acquire a letter of recommendation to meet this guy. Of course, it wasn’t only Tokan that could write a letter of recommendation to meet Vaize.

There were around 6 more NPCs who could do the same in Falcon City. However, not all letters of recommendation were the same. Obviously, a letter of recommendation from the legendary-grade NPC Tokan was the highest tier.

“Thank you.”

He had no reason to refuse, so he immediately took a bow. With this recommendation letter, he would have no need to meet Tokan for a while. He would have to manage his familiarity if he didn't want the ring of fate disappearing, but that wasn't so hard.

"You want to learn about elementals?"

Tokan's recommendation letter was indeed very effective. If he acquired a letter of recommendation from another lower-rank NPC, he would have to raise his familiarity all over again.

"Yes."

Sanghyuk politely nodded his head while he replied.

"Why do you want to learn about them?"

"I have once heard that the most mystic power that makes up this universe is the power of elementals. I wish to learn more about the elementals that appear in many objects and make the world turn."

This was obviously a line that Sanghyuk had prepared beforehand. Preparing lines before meeting special NPCs like Vaize was a must.

Of course, a model answer like this didn't work on all NPCs. For some NPCs, one had to adapt to the circumstances. However, this kind of answer worked fine for the 'Seeker' Vaize.

"Hmm, from your words, I guess you aren't someone to boast with your elementalism."

Vaize closed the book in front of him and stood up from his seat.

"Follow me. I shall tell you what elementals are."

Vaize pulled out a book from his shelf. When he did, the shelf split in half and a hidden chamber appeared.

'Vaize's secret laboratory! Tokan's letter of recommendation sure is amazing.'

Sanghyuk's model answer on top of Tokan's letter of recommendation worked

seamlessly, and he could enter the secret laboratory without any chain quests. It was an unfair reality for the other users who would have to go through suffering, but so what? The world was like that...

Congratulations. You have cleared the sudden quest 'Tokan's Recommendation Letter' and acquired a slight amount of karma.

The sudden quest was done, but that wasn't important right now.

"Elementalism is one of the things I have researched for a long time... , though, I still have a lot of things I don't know than I do, but I think I can tell you what elementalism is."

Along with those words, Vaize gave him a thick book.

You have acquired 'Foundations on Elementalism' from the 'Seeker' Vaize.

Sanghyuk smiled happily while looking down at the thick book in his hand. Foundations on elementalism, this was the book through which he could acquire the Ancient Knowledge 'Elementalism'.

Elementalism was the stereotypical nullary Ancient Knowledge.

Nullary Ancient Knowledge was also referred to as the Mastery Knowledge. While other Ancient Knowledge expanded from primary to secondary and tertiary, Mastery Knowledge didn't expand like so.

Instead, they had proficiency on each skill, and many more things were revealed as the proficiency increased.

The most common Mastery Knowledge was 'Elementalism', which Sanghyuk had just acquired, 'Taming' and various summoning-class Ancient Knowledge.

"Actually, even I do not know what elementalism exactly is. I have researched and investigated deeply into elementals, but the more I did, the more difficult it was to understand them. I wish you could succeed me and find out what elementals are."



‘Ol’man, you’re saying things nicely, but you’re going to give the same book to the others, aren’t you?’

Actually, the book of Foundations of Elementalism he got from Vaize was a copy of it. Of course, Sanghyuk wasn’t going to nitpick about this here. Nothing would change even if he did, and he also had some other business with Vaize as well, so it was better to not decrease his familiarity with him.

Sanghyuk put the book inside his bosom and left after greeting him politely.

This was naturally to register the Ancient Knowledge ‘Elementalism’ into his third Soul Hole.

Normally, users with Elementalism were called Elementarists, and the majority of Elementarists preferred Double Souls. The most popular combination out of all of them was to use Elementalism along with a long-range Ancient Knowledge.

However, Sanghyuk had no plans to acquire Ancient Knowledge with long-range skills. Not only that, he wasn’t going to raise the elementals like the other elementarists would do.

To the elementarists, elementals were not only friends and trustworthy companions, but they were also faithful subordinates as well. That was why they made an effort to communicate and interact with them.

Later, the greatest elementalist of all time, the ‘Early Wind’ Maeda would also say that understanding the elemental’s will was the first step of succeeding as an elementalist.

In other words, even if elementals were a type of NPCs with an AI behind them, disdaining was no good, and elementarists had to be considerate of them. However, Sanghyuk was planning to ignore these basics altogether.

The new type of elementalist he thought of... was beyond revolution; it was a destruction.

To make new rules, one had to start by denying ‘common sense’. However, making new rules was difficult precisely because denying common sense was very risky.

However, the important thing here was that Sanghyuk knew the outcome of this challenge. Since he knew the results, he did not need to fear failure. There were

pioneers who stepped on this path before Sanghyuk in his previous life, and as the one who observed them from the closest, he knew precisely what he had to do.

To understand this more correctly, it would require revealing a knowledge unknown to the people of Sanghyuk's previous life... and it was that the 'Burst' Nar'el, who also contributed to the popularity of card matter along with the 'Crash' Choi Sangryul was also a masterpiece made by Sanghyuk.

The 'Burst' Nar'el – the pioneer Sanghyuk knew of.



The Ancient Knowledge 'Elementalism' will be absorbed into the third Soul Hole.

You have '1' empty Soul Hole remaining.

Sanghyuk didn't delay and immediately learned Elementalism through the book.

Ancient Knowledge 'Elementalism' [Beginner-level Elementalism]

: You have acquired the knowledge of the power of elementals, passed down from the ancient times. You can now feel the power of elementals in various objects.

Details: Fragrance of Elementals(C)[Movement speed and attribute resistance increases.], Friend of the Elementals(C)[Magic power and attributed attack power increases.], Care of the Elementals(C)[Magic defense and physical defense increases.]

Proficiency : 0

Summon lowest-rank fire elemental

-Summon a lowest-rank fire elemental that looks like a lizard.

[Proficiency : 0]

Summon lowest-rank water elemental

-Summon a lowest-rank water elemental that looks like a fish.

[Proficiency : 0]

Summon lowest-rank wind elemental

-Summon a lowest-rank wind elemental that looks like a butterfly.

[Proficiency : 0]

Summon lowest-rank earth elemental

-Summon a lowest-rank earth elemental that looks like a boar.

[Proficiency : 0]

Summon lowest-rank wood elemental

-Summon a lowest-rank wood elemental that looks like a stag beetle.

[Proficiency : 0]

Elemental contract (Lowest-grade)

-You can contract with numerous lowest-rank elementals of this world.

[Proficiency : 0]

Sanghyuk nodded his head after looking at the skills. Learning elementalism enabled the user to summon what was known as the five elementals. However, there were numerous elementals in the world of EL. Of course, growth from lowest → low → mid → high → highest was only possible for the first elemental.

The rest either had no rank or could only grow to mid or high rank. Some elementals didn't even possess a rank.

# Chapter 23

## The Third Ancient Knowledge (2)

‘Now I have one Soul Hole left... I’ll need a lot of time to get this one so I’ll have to bear with three Ancient Knowledge for a while.’

There was a reason he left a Soul Hole empty. Well, there wouldn’t be any big problems even if he left it empty.

‘The fusion of Nar’el’s Elemental Burst and Choi Sangryul’s Heavenly Dragon Card Deck... what do I call that?’

Sanghyuk did make the deck, but he didn’t name it. He didn’t like giving it grand names. Actually, Elemental Burst and Heavenly Dragon Card Deck weren’t things that he came up, on his own, but was thought up of by Nar’el and Choi Sangryul themselves.

“Let’s just go with Special Deck.”

It was a really boring name, but it wasn’t like the name mattered anyway.

‘Let’s wrap up elementalism around here and... should I switch main weapons now?’

Until now, Sanghyuk hadn’t set on a main weapon. In his previous life, he used the sword as the main weapon, but he was planning to change it in this life.

Actually, swords had good performance and were easy to use as well. And above all, they were the most common.

The reason he was trying to change his weapon this time was because of the tremendous potential possessed by wire-type weapons, such as whips.

Unlike swords, wire-type weapons were incredibly hard to wield. Even across all of EL, there was almost no weapon that was harder to use than wire-type weapons.

Not only that, it was hard to find one as well. The most basic weapon of the wire-type was the whip, and whips were incredibly rare compared to other weapons.

Then why was Sanghyuk trying to use the incredibly rare, and incredibly difficult-to-wield wire weapons as his main weapon?

The reason was simple. Potential, to be exact, the limitations and power of wire-type weapons would overwhelm that of the sword's when trained to perfection.

Of course, wire weapons were extremely difficult to use. Even users with high VRA and good in-game knowledge could just swing it around without hurting themselves at best. This was why wire-type weapons were mostly used as the 4th or 5th main weapon.

In EL, there was a system called the 'Main Weapon Bonus', so the type of weapon that was set as the main weapon could receive 15% increase in damage.

Second main weapons received 7%, third 5%, and finally, 4th and 5th main weapons, well, more like support weapons, received 2% increase.

There were no boosts at all from the 6th.

For this reason, many users set their main weapons until the fifth.

This weapon bonus may seem like nothing, but the difference was quite big according to order. The main weapon that filled the first place of that list had to be a weapon that the user used very frequently.

Users had to be very cautious in setting a main weapon. This was because an insane amount of karma was needed to switch out main weapons afterward. It was an unimaginable amount of karma at low levels, and a hefty sum even at high levels, so it wasn't a price that many were prepared to take.

The disappearance of karma meant level down. Although not much as the first main weapon, it required karma to switch 2nd to 5th main weapons as well, so the majority of the users did not switch their main weapons once set.

Will you set the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip as your main weapon? (Y/N)

Sanghyuk nodded his head and touched the (Y) lightly. Since he had thought about this beforehand, there was no need for him to hesitate.

Since he was here anyway, he set his second main weapon to the sword. Since swords were very versatile weapons, it was natural for the sword to be his second main weapon.

Having set his weapons, Sanghyuk took out the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip from his bag.

The Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip was around 8m long. Although it was considerably long, it was thin enough to be wrapped around one arm if wrapped without any gaps.

Tokan made 400 pieces of 2 cm sized fragments by hammering the Ten Millennia Goldbone into a thin sheet, and made the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip by connecting each of those pieces.

Thanks to that, the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip was both very thin and very soft. And depending on the use, the fragments would turn very sharp as well.

\*Chrrrrrrrrt, pa-pa-pa-pah!\*

Sanghyuk extended the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip and tried manipulating it lightly. Sanghyuk could freely wield most of the weapons disregarding proficiency, but he felt that he would need the help from the system to use the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

There existed proficiency levels for all weapons, and that would increase the more the corresponding weapon was used. Once proficiency rose, a 'force-support' effect would be applied systematically to enable a user to wield the weapon more proficiently.

For reference, proficiency was known to be insanely hard to increase once it reached a certain point. On the other hand, it was also notorious for dropping incredibly fast once the weapon was not used often.

'There's no shortcut for this. Practice is all you can do.'

Sanghyuk felt that he would only be satisfied after he could manipulate the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip as though it was his own hands.

For that level, he felt like he not only had to get used to using the weapon but also increase the proficiency level to 100, master-tier. The end of proficiency was 250 (Grandmaster-tier), but in practice, such things only existed in imagination.

\*Chrrrt, chrrrrrrt.\* (T/N: imagine card shuffling sounds)

Sanghyuk focused on regaining his senses by swinging around the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip continuously. Perhaps due to his concentration, his proficiency with wire-type weapons rose incredibly fast.

No matter how low-level his manipulation was, this speed was unprecedented.

Sanghyuk swung around the whip for four hours straight on the spot. He nodded his head in satisfaction only after around four hours had passed.

“I think I got the hang of it now.”

Actually, Sanghyuk’s manipulation of the whip was very proficient and couldn’t just be called ‘got the hang of’, but in Sanghyuk’s view, he still lacked many things.

‘Let’s fill the gaps in real battle.’

Sanghyuk didn’t have so much time as to swing around with the whip to his heart’s content. Since he got the hang of it, he had to hunt stronger monsters with it.

‘With this, I should be able to penetrate the Snake Caves, right?’

The Snake Caves was a hunting zone where the majority of users hadn’t even broken through the entrance yet. The Snake Caves was like a maze with tangled paths, and there were 22 entrances.

At the current point in time, even the highest leveled users were hunting near the entrance, but after some time, it would become the second most popular hunting field after the Valley of the Dead.



Sanghyuk headed to the least well-known entrance of the Snake Caves, which was the furthest away from Falcon City. His objective today was to find the ‘Giant snake’ field deep inside the Snake Caves.

Giant snakes were the cream of the crop within the Snake Caves. They were easy to hunt and had good drops as well. Hunting these things not only gave out a lot of karma, but they also dropped very important crafting materials as well.



Sanghyuk saved the entrance of the Snake Caves on the Marking Book he had finally bought before entering the Snake Caves.

Snake Caves harbored snakes of many different types and sizes, and people with ophidiophobia (fear of snakes) would hate this place to their guts.

Fortunately, Sanghyuk had no particular rejection towards snakes, so he didn't fear to tread inside the Snake Caves.

\*Whistle, crrrrrrrunch!\*

When Sanghyuk swung his Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip, the 10 snakes in front of him were sliced to pieces as though they just went through a shredder. According to the angle of the swing, the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip could slash the opponent as though it was a sword, so shredding snakes was easy.

'The best weapon to be used in the Snake Caves is, of course, the whip.'

Around Sanghyuk were at least 100 snakes torn into pieces. It was indeed true that it was very difficult to find a more efficient weapon than a wire-type weapon within the Snake Caves.

Using a melee weapon like a sword may risk poisoning from a snake, and using long-range weapons wasn't enough to kill the onslaught of the infinitely many snakes.

In the end, in a place like the Snake Caves, ones with wide-area attacks were very respected, and wire-type weapons could be used in such a way.

'It's about time the snake-men came out...'

The true masters of the Snake Caves were the snake-men race. Snake-men were basically large snakes with two arms on the upper side of their body, which they used as though they were human arms.

Snake-men were a race that would frequently appear later in the game as well. The Snake Caves he just entered would harbor just snake-man soldiers, snake-man archers, and snake-man warriors, but once the 'Snake Tower', which could be called the kingdom of snake-men, appeared later in the game, users would meet many different types of snake-men.

The hundreds of snakes at the entrance were merely pets(?) of the snake-men.

Sanghyuk shredded the onslaught of snakes with his whip while waiting for the snake-men to come out. A Floating Lumistone which he had bought in a miscellaneous store before he came to the Snake Caves, was floating next to him, so his surroundings were very bright.

Floating Limestones, once set, just floated around the user and emitted light. It was naturally a must-have item in dark caves like this place.

Sanghyuk kept proceeding forward. The Snake Caves were very maze-like, and he may wander around on the same spot if he was lost, but Sanghyuk proceeded forward as though he had the map of the Snake Caves in his head.

Of course, nothing like that existed in Sanghyuk's mind. Even though Sanghyuk had returned to the past, remembering every single event was impossible. Instead, Sanghyuk had his numerous experiences. The general pattern unique to such types of dungeons... Sanghyuk knew that pattern well enough so that he could find his way without getting lost in this maze-like caves.

After some time passed, Sanghyuk finally met a snake-man. The snake-man soldier was several heads taller than Sanghyuk. It charged towards Sanghyuk with a single crude spear.

\*Hiss, hiss!\*

When the excited snake-man pierced with its spear, Sanghyuk lightly swung his whip and wrapped it around the spear.

\*Whistle, clang\*

The Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip spun the spear into a spiral, and as a result, the snake-man's spear flew into the air.

Although this may be a surprising result for the snake-man, it was an obvious outcome for Sanghyuk.

At the same time he flicked away the spear, Sanghyuk made the whip stand in a straight line and extended his arm forward as though he was stabbing with a sword.

\*Stab, crrrunch!\*

At that moment, the Ten Millennia Goldbone, which stood stiffly like a sword, pierced the snake-man's head.

'Good!'

Sanghyuk nodded his head when the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip moved perfectly according to how he wished for it to.

The Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip... this weapon indeed had tremendous potential.

# Chapter 24

## Whale Fights Result in Dead Whales (1)

Snake-men were the strongest monsters in the Land of Dusk, the beginner-level play area. It was hard to find monsters stronger than the snake-men before going to the 'Hellfire Desert', the next play area.

The planet of Treenark was divided into the Land of Dusk, the beginner-level play area, to the Hellfire Desert, Heroic Plains, then lastly the Solar Continent.

The areas other than the Land of Dusk had no restrictions to move between each other, but there were restrictions in the Land of Dusk.

A user could only leave the Land of Dusk after going through a process of 'proving one's existence', and there were two standards of these existences.

First, a user had to be level 45, and second, the user had to pass through the Cave of the Giants at the end of the Land of Dusk.

Both of these requirements were extremely difficult. It was hard to say which one was easier.

Without going through the Cave of the Giants, it was impossible to leave the Land of Dusk. The entire Land of Dusk was basin-shaped, so the only way out was the Cave of the Giants.

To pass through the Cave of the Giants for sure, it would require 5 users, all over level 45, to be in a party. Of course, later in the game, the so-called 'Giant Buses', who were basically high-level users who carried users through the cave with compensation, did happen. However, that only happened later, and users would have to break through the Cave of the Giants through their own power for quite a while.

In other words, they could only live in the Land of Dusk for quite a long time. The fact that the Land of Dusk was bigger than most of the other world maps of other games made the users feel less stifled, but there could only be clashes between them once the number of users explosively increased.

“So you just stood there like an imp?”

Gale, guildmaster of the Ghost guild, asked his right hand, Last Joon.

“Hyung, we couldn’t do anything. Those bastards... they pushed us back with twice our numbers.”

“You should have endured anyway. Since it was the Snake Caves, you should have been able to hold out if you endured in a narrow place... and it’s not like they could hit you easily since they didn’t declare a guild war on us. Why did you let that place go so easily?”

“We tried to hold the fort as well... but these guys put malefactors up front. I don’t know any of them, but they were considerably powerful, and we might have been wiped out at that rate.”

“Malefactors? Then the Providence guild actually accepted malefactors in their guild? There’s no way that’s true...”

At this point in time, malefactors were public enemies. Accepting malefactors into one’s guild would subject the guild to many insults. This was why many large-scale guilds warned their members to be cautious not to become a malefactor.

“They didn’t belong to Providence. I think Providence guys hired them as mercenaries.”

“Oh... those damn bastards. So that’s how you want to play, eh?”

It was true that Ghost and Providence were on bad terms right now, but Gale didn’t think that the opponent would be so extreme in their hands. He also thought that he couldn’t stay like this.

“First up, even though the Providence guys didn’t do anything directly, it won’t be a problem for us to declare guild war on Providence according to the guild system of EL. The Providence guys probably thought that we’ll swallow it down once... but I will not.”

Gale shook his head and opened the system menu. The guild war menu indeed had a message saying that they could declare war on the guild, Providence.

“Hyung. Are you really going to do it? Providence guys aren’t the guys to look down on.”

“Hey, do you know what would happen when we look like easy prey to others when we have to expand our guild right now? We’ll be doomed without knowing it. It’s better to just go bust than to gradually die.”

“Hmm, I guess that’s true...”

Last Joon nodded after hearing Gale’s words, and Gale immediately declared guild war on Providence.

The guild, Ghost, has declared on the guild, Providence. From now on, users belonging to these two guilds will enter ‘free fighting state’.

“Gather all of our members. The Snake Caves is a place we must regain for the future of our guild.”

The Snake Caves was a hunting field where numerous highest-ranking guilds were flocking to. Ghost had already positioned themselves in one of the entrances of the Snake Caves, ‘S-4’, and had conquered quite deeply.

There were many hunting fields in the Land of Dusk, but the Snake Caves were within the top three. That was why they tried to make this place theirs by coming here early. However, in that process, Providence hindered them so much, and Gale couldn’t endure it anymore.

“I’ll activate the emergency contact lines.”

Since a guild war was declared, they had to gather all possible forces. Guild wars in EL happened under a simple rule – Unless both guilds chose to end the war or one guild was eradicated, the guild war would continue.

Free fighting state meant that they could fight each other regardless of place or time, and killing the opponent would result in karma and item gains and vice versa, they would lose karma and items if they were killed. In one sentence, the guild war was a full frontal fight with everything at stake.

Ghost and Providence guilds were high-ranked guilds within the top 50 guilds right now. The news that the two guilds had started a war spread all over EL.

Until now, mid to small guilds have clashed against each other, but the guilds within the top 50 had never warred against each other.

Perhaps due to that, many users watched the practically first ‘proper’ guild war in EL.



The Snake Caves which made Ghost and Providence clash. Actually, the guild master of Providence, Linx, thought that the Ghost guild, no, Gale, would look over this once.

No matter how great the Snake Caves was as a hunting field, there were around ten discovered entrances, so he just had to go look for another one. Of course, the S-4 entrance, which they stole off Ghost was known to be the best among the 10 entrances, but Linx thought that it wasn't to the point that Ghost would declare war on them.

However, Linx's predictions were off. His greatest mistake was to underestimate Gale's personality.

“Contact Demon Army.”

When Ghost declared war on Providence, Providence also utilized all their emergency contact line and gathered all fighting forces. However, Linx knew that this would just end up with a tie with Ghost, and resorted to dangerous methods.

“Hyung, Demon Army guys are dangerous. We might be attacked by other guilds and not Ghost if we keep getting caught up with them.”

Linx's little brother and the vice guild master of Providence, Taesaja, was worried about dragging the Demon army into this. *(T/N: Taesaja = Taishi Ci, a general from the Three Kingdoms, I used the Korean Romanization because the user is Korean here.)*

“Gyungmin, this is not the time for us to picky about our methods. We'll really be doomed if we get pushed back here. I also want to win without using the Demon Army guys. But the Ghost guild isn't such an easy guild. Their guild level is also 3 like us, and they also maxed out the 100 member limit like us. Not only that, the average level of our guilds is similar as well. In other words, they possess similar forces like us. What

do you think will happen if we go to war with such a guild?"

"Victory and defeat won't be decided easily, and the guild war will drag out..."

"Yes, how long do you think the guild members will hold out once the guild war drags out for long? Right now, we're all motivated and encouraging each other, but once they die a few times and drop karma and items... they'll start leaving the guild."

"But that goes for Ghost as well."

"Yes. You're right. So this war will be about how long we can survive when both guilds are going downhill. It'll be a chicken game. What do you think we'll have when we actually win that? Even if we win, we won't win."

"Hmmm..."

Linx's words weren't wrong. Of course, they wouldn't know the result unless they tried, but it was very likely that it would go as Linx said.

"Let's borrow Demon Army's strength for one last time. If it's those PvP-crazy bastards, they will bring us victory. Where are we fighting right now?"

"We're scattered all over the place, but the most intense one is at the Subterranean Plaza inside the Snake Caves."

"Really? Then let's contact Demon Army first, and we'll strike from the back. You have the map of the caves, right?"

"But it isn't entirely accurate..."

"It's fine. Our opponents don't have an accurate map either. It doesn't matter."

"Okay, then I'll contact the Demon Army right away."

"Yes. Let's crush Ghost beyond repair today."

Linx was planning to exterminate all users that entered the Snake Caves by borrowing power from Demon Army. If he could overwhelm the opponents at the beginning, then he could tilt the favor of the war his way.



‘We’ll win this war!’

Resolved Linx. However... the Snake Caves held a completely foreign variable. The man who was in closed-door training(?) in the Snake Caves since one month ago.

He got swept up in this war.

Sanghyuk hunted snake-men and giant snakes in the Snake Caves for one month. He sometimes visited Falcon City, but he spent the majority of his time in the caves.

There was no need for him to move to another hunting field. He could gather a lot of karma by killing snake-men, and he could gather a lot of ‘Steel scales’, material that could be gotten from giant snakes, and would soon become extremely popular in demand.

Normal users would team up in threes to hunt snake-men, but Sanghyuk easily hunted many snake-men by himself. There were many reasons as to why Sanghyuk could bring out tremendous efficiency in here, and the biggest reason was the overwhelming performance of the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip.

To put it simply, Sanghyuk was using a chainsaw to hunt while other people were hunting with wooden swords.

The difference between wooden swords and chainsaws was huge. So the snake-men died as soon as they met Sanghyuk without being able to dodge, block, or do anything to Sanghyuk’s Ten Millennia Goldbone whip.

Once knowledge about production-related Ancient Knowledge spread and a few talented users start producing proper items, the gap between normal users and Sanghyuk may decrease.

However, no user could possibly catch up to Sanghyuk when the best equipment on the market were magic-grade items from the Falcon Sewer dungeon.

Thanks to this gap, Sanghyuk could camp out in the Snake Caves, which no other users could dream of. And thanks to hunting for one month within the Snake Caves, his level had increased tremendously and could stock up on Steel scales which its demand would skyrocket later.

Nothing blocked his way. He even wondered that something bad may happen after everything went so well. Since there were no competitors, the Snake Caves were practically monopolized by him.

Sanghyuk swallowed the entire Snake Caves and was digesting it well as well. At least... until one week ago.

‘Goddammit, why are those guys causing a mess all the way here.’

Sanghyuk frowned while looking at the users of Providence and Ghost guilds who were fighting against each other.

One week ago, when users started crawling into the Snake Caves, he thought that the time had come and decreased his hunting area to where only the giant snakes spawned.

He was planning to finish up the Snake Caves hunt after killing as many giant snakes as possible.

However, now that war had occurred within the Snake Caves, he couldn’t stay focused in battle.

‘From how their guild marks are unfamiliar, they must be so-so guilds.’

Once a guild war was declared, a half-translucent mark signifying their guild would appear above their heads. Through this, allies and enemies could be differentiated.

‘I should quit my hunt today... huh?’

When the fight became bigger, Sanghyuk was planning to leave the Snake Caves. However, a new group of users that appeared held his steps back.

‘Why are those hyena bastards here?’

Sanghyuk was hiding in one corner of the Snake Caves, and his eyes shined after looking at the users of Demon Army who were circling around the battlefield.

He didn’t recognize the Ghost guild and the Providence guild, but he did recognize the Demon Army guild. They were the guild that did the worst of the worst actions across

all of the malefactor guilds in EL. Many punitive expeditions were set up in order to put their actions to a stop, but the users of Demon Army specialized in hiding and escaping, and they survived bitterly until the end.

“Demon Dog’ Killing Machine. To think I’d meet that trash in a place like this... ’

Sanghyuk instantly recognized the guild master of the Demon Army guild, Killing Machine. This was natural since Killing Machine was one of the guys who continued to haunt him after he became a cripple and couldn’t play the game properly in his previous life.

He never appeared anywhere near him when Sanghyuk was doing well, but when Sanghyuk became a cripple, he always found a way towards him and haunted him.

‘Let’s see... So one side called them as mercenaries? They are stupid. Not one guild survived after cooperating with the Demon Army guild... well, they probably thought that the immediate profit was more important than things like that.’

Sanghyuk could imagine what happened.

‘I had no thoughts of interfering if it’s just an ordinary guild war... but that changes if Demon Army is involved.’

Sanghyuk put the Recall stone back into his bag and unfolded the Ten Millennia Goldbone wrapped around his arm.

‘Killing Machine, you might feel that it’s unjust... but it looks like I’ll have to get some of my debt off you.’

It was a little funny that he was taking revenge for what hadn’t even happened yet, but for Sanghyuk, it was a very vivid memory, so he couldn’t just look past this.

# Chapter 25

## Whale Fights Result in Dead Whales (2)

“Kill them!”

\*Bbbbooom\*

Killing Machine, who struck Ghost guild's back along with Providence guild's elites that included Linx, shouted with an excited expression.

PK was his life; especially when he could benefit from doing so.

[I'll say this again, but pretend to fight and don't get yourselves killed. We'll devour both Ghost and Providence today.]

Killing Machine sent a group message to his guild members.

Linx from Providence believed in Killing Machine, but as an innate trash, Killing Machine was planning to devour not only Ghost but Providence as well.

‘Providence is running out of juice anyway. It's better to throw them away after sucking whatever's left in it.’

Devouring both the Ghost guild and the Providence guild at the same time was a huge business. Of course, this would be normally impossible, but right now, these two guilds were bearing their fangs at each other.

‘Then should I enjoy my time until my meal is here?’

Killing Machine had great PvP abilities. He had a high level and decent equipment so he would be able to survive this battlefield as long as he didn't push himself.

Not only that, the Demon Army members were all very quick-witted as well, so they retreated while not looking like they were doing so. The users from Ghost and Providence were in a brawl, so they didn't notice Demon Army's actions.

However, since Sanghyuk was watching from the darkness, he could see Demon Army's schemes in plain sight.

'They... are trying to gobble both guilds at once, eh?'

Sanghyuk realized the intentions of the Demon Army guild and smiled with an interested expression.

'Should I say, as expected of them? Well, either way, it looks like both of those guilds will be bitten to death by that mad dog.'

Sanghyuk shook his head while watching two guilds unknown to him. Of course, he wasn't planning to help them out at all.

If it was him from his previous life, he might have stepped out to help due to his wimpy justice, but the current Sanghyuk only observed their battle with cold eyes.

'Even Demon Army would have a hard time gobbling up those two guilds. Then I... guess I should gobble the fattened up Demon Army.'

It was that simple. Demon Army would devour Providence and Ghost, and Sanghyuk will eat the Demon Army that ate both of them.

'Well, then. What should I do while I wait?'

He had completely seeped into the darkness. He was waiting for the right opportunity.



The battle between Ghost and Providence was intense. They knew that the loser of this battle will be the loser of the entire war. This fact drove them to fight without retreating despite the big losses.

However, when time passed, Ghost started being pushed back. No matter how fake they were acting, as long as the users of Demon Army existed, they could only be pushed back, objectively speaking.

Gale tried his best with a sword in each hand, but when he was defeated by Killing Machine, the tide of victory suddenly tilted towards Providence's favor.

Providence also received a big damage and all that remained was Linx as well as a few elites, but the important thing was that Ghost was annihilated.

'We won!'

Linx thought that they would get the advantage in this guild war through this battle.

'If we clear up the remnants of the Ghost guild while the ones that died here can't log in for 12 hours, we can't lose this war... '

Linx tried to grab onto the flag of victory while thinking about the aftermath. However, his thoughts couldn't continue for long.

"Wh, what the hell? Urgh!"

Killing Machine, no, Demon Army had shown their true colors.

They started attacking the users of Providence guild who were tired after the battle.

"S, stop!"

Linx shouted loudly as he looked around. There were around 10 remaining members, while 12 from the Demon Army surrounded them...

'Ah... we were deceived!'

Linx realized that he had completely made a fool of himself after looking at the tired Providence guild members and the opposing Demon Army members who looked to be in their full condition.

"Well then. The results won't change, so let's do this quietly, okay?"

Killing Machine made an evil smirk while looking at Linx.

"You bastard... you..."

"You believed in me? You're stupid for doing that. Why believe in me when you could have believed in anyone else?"

Killing Machine was shameless. He was indeed fitting to be called trash of trash.

Anger filled Linx's head, and he realized that his greed had called upon a disaster. However, he wasn't planning to die obediently.

"You f\*cking malefactors! It won't go as you wish! Let's show them the power of Providence!"

Linx re-gripped the spear in his hand and charged against Killing Machine. The rest of the Providence guild members also charged towards the Demon Army members.

It was true that the members of Providence were very tired after that battle, but they weren't about to collapse just yet. They were planning to resist until the end in their frustration of being betrayed by Demon Army.

Resistance ended as resistance.

There was no miraculous reversal or anything, and the remaining 10 members of Providence were all killed by Demon Army guild. Linx was especially butchered by Killing Machine himself and paid for his greed.

\*Pssss.\*

Killing Machine shook his head lightly after seeing Linx who disappeared into particles of light after struggling to the very end.

"Damn guy. So stubborn."

Since Linx was the last to die, there were no remaining Providence members.

"What the hell? Four of you died? That's embarrassing considering that you went against half dead people."

Killing Machine frowned after seeing that the original 12 members were reduced to 8.

"We couldn't help it. They were stubborn until the end."

Demon Army guild was a guild of malefactors, and malefactors were very proficient at PvP. However, the equipment side was better for the Providence guild. And since the betrayed Providence guild members desperately fought back, the damage was very big.

“I always say this, but the one who dies is the stupid one. Everyone get yourselves together. Let’s first collect our loot-”

Killing Machine was about to leave the place quickly after collecting loot since the battle was over. Since they had to stay low after doing a big job like this, they had to clear up all the items before the dead users were able to log back in again.

However, Killing Machine, no, the users of Demon Army guild couldn’t collect any of the loot on the floor.

\*Pew, bbbbbbboom!\*

A sudden explosion! Just as when they thought that it was all over, a ball of fire struck the hindmost Demon Army guild member and exploded. That user instantly collapsed onto the floor, engulfed in flames. The other members of Demon Army could only flinch on their spot after seeing that.

“An ambush!”

The members of Demon Army had many experiences in PvP, so they knew what this attack meant. Perhaps due to that, they moved around busily in order to defend against the ambush.

However, something was quicker than them.

\*Swoooooosh, chrrrrrt!\*

A strange rope-like thing wrapped around the frontmost Demon Army user!

Sanghyuk’s hyena hunt had begun.

\*Crunch.\*

“Uuurgh!”

The Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip wrapped tightly around the neck, and the next moment, the Demon Army user’s neck bone was shattered to pieces. The user whose neck was crushed didn’t think that he would die in a single strike.

The attack this time wasn’t something he had ever experienced before, so he just



collapsed down onto the floor without being able to scream at all.

Sanghyuk, who killed two Demon Army user in a brief moment, stepped out of the darkness and looked around.

‘So there’s six left now?’

Sanghyuk expanded all of his senses in order to fight against the six malefactors.

“Don’t panic! There’s only one enemy!”

The one who regained his calm first was naturally Killing Machine. As soon as he found out that Sanghyuk was alone, he shouted to the other members to calm them down.

The fact that the opponent defeated two Demon Army users in an instant may seem amazing, but this was still six on one.

“Damned rat is getting cocky. How dare you try to interfere with us.”

Killing Machine knew what Sanghyuk was aiming for. However, the opponent was just one person. He believed that no matter how great a user was, one on six was impossible to win against.

“Everyone get yourselves together and just surround him properly.”

\*Srrr, shing\*

Killing Machine ordered the other Demon Army members and pulled out two daggers from his waist.

“I’ll pull out your eyes.”

Killing Machine could use a pair of daggers very proficiently and looked as if he was about to strike the two daggers into Sanghyuk’s head at any moment. The remaining five users who were ordered by him to surround him started approaching Sanghyuk slowly as well. They were trying to restrict his movement, and at this rate, Sanghyuk looked like he would be in for trouble.

However, the one who was facing them, Sanghyuk, was actually very calm. It was more like he had plenty of room for doing things.

‘One... two... three! Now!’

Sanghyuk heightened his senses and waited for the Demon Army users to surround him completely. Then, he extended his left hand towards the floor when they came within a certain range.

Fusion Card skill, ‘Small Tornado’!

\*Fwooooooosh, ttttttut!\*

A streak of gust was emitted from Sanghyuk’s hand, and it swept at a radius of 4 meters around Sanghyuk. The ones who stood there were all swept inside it as well.

“Whoa!”

“Urgh!”

All five Demon Army members within Sanghyuk’s range lost their balance and swayed.

And at that moment, Sanghyuk spun around quickly and swung his right arm.

\*Clack clack, cl-cl-cl-clang!\*

The little pieces of Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip clicked together in a straight line and changed into a long sword-like weapon. And that sword possessed a strong, sharp aura that seemed like it would slash anything.

\*Slaaaash, snip! Crrrrrunch!\*

A strand of sharp light was emitted from Sanghyuk. That light flashed very quickly at 360 degrees, and momentarily separated space to upper and lower regions.

The results of the flash of light were frightening. The five users that surrounded Sanghyuk... their heads had all disappeared.

To be exact, their heads were each cut apart in different ways.

\*Thud-thud-thud-thud-thud\*

The fact that they were beheaded meant that they couldn't endure Sanghyuk's strike, so all five of them collapsed down onto the floor while scattering particles of light.

Sanghyuk's attack power itself was beyond common sense, so not even one of them could endure it. If their defense was at a level they could endure Sanghyuk's level, their heads would be injured at most, but not beheaded. But this was not the case, so they were all beheaded.

"Th, this..."

Fortunately, Killing Machine was barely outside the range, so it ended with a clear slash line on his nose.

\*Drip.\*

A lot of light particles dripped down onto the floor, but Killing Machine couldn't even think about wiping it.

He was literally overwhelmed.

Sanghyuk's transcendental power mercilessly pressured Killing Machine.

A sky above a sky had appeared in front of him.

That sky opened his mouth while looking at Killing Machine.

"Why don't you just obediently die? It's not like anything would change at this point."

# Chapter 26

## Elemental Card (1)

Killing Machine squeezed out his courage to win against the fear that pressured him. As a result, he could go against Sanghyuk.

But that was it, courage changed nothing.

\*Clang, cl-clang!\*

The daggers he swung were deflected by the snake-like Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip. In the first place, the difference in power between them was large, and even his PvP abilities were nothing compared to Sanghyuk. Not only that, Sanghyuk even had a specialized title against malefactors. Putting that all together, Killing Machine collapsed down without even enduring for 10 seconds.

\*Crunch, thud.\*

Killing Machine, like the other members of his guild, fell down on the ground, beheaded, and disappeared into particles of light, leaving behind a few items.

When Killing Machine disappeared what remained from the battle was the numerous the items.

The traces left by Ghost, Providence, and Demon Army. The bear does the trick, and the owner takes the money. The three guilds fought to the death, and the loots were all for Sanghyuk's to take.

Since there were too many items, Sanghyuk left the Snake Caves with a large bag on his shoulders. He hid the items in a suitable place and carried them to a safe place in turns.

Sanghyuk put almost all the items up for the commission. There were a few that costs quite high, but there wasn't anything that he could use, so it was better to just sell them all off.

Since there was nothing like the showing seller's identity in commissioned sales stores, no one would know who sold what. No matter how hard Ghost or Providence looked for him, all they would be lead to was Demon Army guild.

Demon Army, on the other hand, might look for Sanghyuk, but they had to stay low for a while due to their positions as malefactors. If not, they might be wiped out by the currently popular malefactor hunting.

'Looks like I should stop hunting in the Snake Caves.'

The Snake Caves was definitely a good hunting field, but the rumor of it had spread wide so he would run into competition soon. It became especially famous, though, for the wrong reason, through the guild war this time.

'I've leveled up quite a bit... and gathered a lot of money, so should I start working on the elemental cards?'

Sanghyuk's current level was a whopping 42. From level 40, the amount of karma required to level up increased explosively, and reaching level 41 was like reaching level 40 twice, and reaching level 42 would require reaching level 40 3 times on top of that.

Since leveling was so hard, there were many users who enjoyed other contents after reaching level 40. Actually, EL contained various contents other than just leveling up, so the users were discovering and enjoying those contents.

The reason production-class users increased lately was also due to a similar reason.

Sanghyuk decided to look at the commissioned sales store and the auction. Although he had looked at the commissioned sales store and the auction frequently whenever he returned to Falcon City to restock, this was the first time he had a proper look for a while.

'Let's see... the prices of steel scales are skyrocketing... while all the other crafting items are rising as well?'

The market was moving exactly as he had known it. Until now, Sanghyuk had scraped up items as soon as he had some gold. Although there were expert merchants who predicted similar to Sanghyuk and he couldn't monopolize every item, Sanghyuk could practically monopolize the items that even they couldn't predict.

‘Merchants invested in ores or jewels since they’re relatively safe to invest in, but I know the future, so I scraped in all the crafting items.’

Knowing and not knowing the future was very different. Of course, he may be done in by the merchants if he was careless, so he was always cautious in his actions.

‘Looks like the steel scales will hit an all-time high in a few days’

Steel scales were a necessary item when creating special weapons or armor, and the sources were limited, so it was categorized as the highest-class materials.

It was very likely that the prices of steel scales would go as Sanghyuk had predicted. The number of steel scales in his bank warehouse was immense, and it would take a little more time for the Snake Caves to be properly conquered and the supply of steel scales to stabilize, so Sanghyuk was planning to release his stocks when the prices of steel scales reached the highest limit in multiple batches.

‘I should get ready to sell those off in batches... so the problem is buying off the essence items?’

Sanghyuk had a lot of items to sell but had just as much to buy.

‘Now’s the best time to buy the essences. Once the production-class users become proficient enough to enchant attributes, then the prices of essences would skyrocket.’

Essences still had some supply in the commissioned sales store and the auction. Since the usage of these essences wasn’t known, many users just sold them without thinking.

The essences Sanghyuk was talking about... referred to the essences of each attribute.

Essence of fire, essence of water, essence of wind, essence of light, essence of darkness, essence of electricity. There were over 100 types of essences.

Usually, fusing five fragments would result in an essence while fusing five essences would result in a ‘core’. Fusing fragments into essences was easy, they just had to be put in one place, but creating cores from essences required a user or an NPC who has learned alchemy.

Also, fusing five cores would result in a ‘heart’, and this required a special technique

so it couldn't be made right now.

'At this point, there are only fragments and essences, so I just need to focus on these two.'

Sanghyuk was buying off fragments until now, but he waited for the price essences to drop slightly. The various essences were sold slightly expensively since the users found it cool. However, without any demand, the prices kept dropping, and lately, it had reached an all-time low.

He just had to sweep them up now.

The reason Sanghyuk was hoarding the essences was not that he was going to re-sell them, but to use it for himself.

Contracting with elementals required attribute items such as fragments.

Fragments were for the lowest rank, essence for low, core for mid and so on.

Like that, the grade of the attribute items also became higher as the elemental's rank became higher. Actually, elementalists didn't require much of these attribute items.

Users who have learned elementalism only needed these attribute items for their first contract and raised them with care, so they would not need any additional attribute items.

There were rare cases where elementals were destroyed due to special circumstances, but that was extremely rare, so it didn't cause a lot of problems.

Then why was Sanghyuk hoarding these items?

The reason was... because of the way Sanghyuk used elementals.

'Elemental Detonation. No matter how I think about it, this is just a money attack.'

Sanghyuk shook his head with a bitter expression as he bought off fragments and essences from the auction and the commissioned sales store.

Elemental Detonation was a technique he had developed, but it had an absurd mechanism for its use.

First up, this started with turning the contracted elemental into 'elemental cards'. Something really strange happened at this point, and it was that the cost of the elemental that turns into a card becomes 0.

Originally, users who learned elementalism could contract with an elemental that befitted the user's ability, but not only that, they could only contract up to a certain number of elementals within a 'cost'.

This cost could be called the biggest penalty that elementalists possessed. However, elemental cards had 0 cost. Of course, the cost would return once the elemental was restored to its original stage. However, Sanghyuk could use the power of the elemental without restoring the card to the elemental.

That was the power of a Card User.

The fusion card that Sanghyuk had secretly told Nar'el in his past life, 'Elemental Burst', was founded on this Elemental Detonation.

'Everything is good about it, but my eyes have to roll every time I use it because the elemental card disappears.'

This was the greatest problem with Elemental Detonation – the indefinite consumption of elementals... and the following endless creation of elemental cards. For this reason, Sanghyuk had to hoard the fragments and essences.

'Right now, I'm using lowest-rank or low-rank elementals, but when I have to use mid-rank and even high-rank elementals for fusion cards... that's horrible just thinking about it.'

Of course, in terms of power, it definitely did its worth in price. It was just horribly expensive and heart-ripping.

'I don't have a choice. I need to prepare for the future even if I have to hoard the attribute items right now.'

Sanghyuk kept buying off the fragments and essences while alternating between the commissioned sales store and the auction. However, he only bought them under a certain price and left the rest alone in order to not alert the merchants.

If he swiped all the fragments and essences right now, then he may trigger the witty



merchants into action, so he had to be careful.

He sold the crafting items and bought the attribute items... Sanghyuk moved around based on that principle, but they weren't the only things. He bought the items that may become expensive later whenever he saw them in the commissioned sales store or the auction.

For example, an item known as 'cursed bone' was so unpopular that no one bought it right now. However, this would change drastically once a user called the 'Deathmaster' Styx uploads his gameplay video on D-tube later.

Styx was a necromancer to the bone, and cursed bones were a necessary reagent that all necromancers always lacked. At that point in time, this cursed bone would have an explosive demand but no supply.

There were a few more items of this kind. These pearls buried under the sand... Sanghyuk gathered all these pearls and put them in his warehouse.

Sanghyuk alternated between buying and selling for one week straight.

As a result, various attribute fragments and essences piled up in his warehouse, as well as pearls under the sand. In reverse, the things he had gathered until now were almost all sold out.

Sanghyuk already knew that this price was already the highest price that would be maintained for around one year, so he cleared out the crafting items without hesitation. Especially in the case of steel scales, he was practically the exclusive seller so he could sell it for an extremely high price.

Users in parties and guilds were starting to conquer the Snake Caves safely from a few days ago so the supply of steel scales would increase, but Sanghyuk had already sold out his steel scales anyway.

He had almost no gold left though.

He spent almost all of his gold to hoard fragments, essences, and other investment items. He felt slightly empty to see the empty gold wallet, but that emptiness all disappeared when he looked at the items in his warehouse.

Sanghyuk first started to take out the numerous fragments to make elemental cards.

Since he could only summon elementals of the lowest rank, he could only make elemental cards of the lowest rank as well.

He had a total of 16 types of elemental cards, and they totaled around 2400 cards.

The most he had was the fragment of fire, and so he made around 400 cards of lowest fire elemental cards. The next was followed by wind, and he had 250 lowest wind elemental cards. Other than that, there was water, wood, earth, light, darkness, steel, electricity, ice, shadow, stone, and moonlight, and some more cards, with each numbering over 100.

These were the cards that would become the sacrifices of Sanghyuk's Elemental Detonation.

'It's hard to gather them but easy to use them up, so let's be careful.'

If he used it here and there just because he had many right now, he might run out at a crucial moment. Even though Sanghyuk was earning a lot of money through information that other users didn't have, wasting elemental cards wasn't a good thing.

'In the case of fire elementals, I should be able to summon a low-rank elemental if I raise it up a little more. It's good that I can raise proficiency fast through Elemental Detonation.'

Sanghyuk, who sacrificed one elemental per use could raise his proficiency much faster than normal elementalists who raise their familiarity with their elementals.

It was just that it was purely impossible to raise familiarity through Elemental Detonation. Even if Sanghyuk tried to raise his familiarity with the elementals while they were in their card state, no elementals would open up to him when their kin were being made into suicide bombers.

In other words, learning Elemental Detonation meant that he would have to give up on becoming a normal elementalist.

'The preparations are just about done... and with this... I should be able to challenge Wyvern's Nest, right?'

Sanghyuk organized all of his cards and put them inside his spatial expansion bag before he stood up. The place he was aiming for next was the hardest but most

splendidly rewarding hunting field, Wyvern's Nest.

# Chapter 27

## Elemental Card (2)

Wyvern's Nest had the highest difficulty as a hunting field in the Land of Dusk, but it was yet undiscovered by other users. Normally, users would have to do prerequisite quests in order to access this place.

To be exact, they had to find out about this place through the prerequisite quest. However, that prerequisite quest was the last quest of an incredibly complex chain quest, so there weren't any users that even received that quest yet.

Naturally, Sanghyuk also didn't have that quest. No, he didn't have any quest that was remotely related to that quest. It was meaningless to him anyway.

Sanghyuk had already experienced that quest in his previous life, so he knew how to get to Wyvern's nest without the quest.

There was the advantage that the navigation system could be used to guide the user to the hunting field if the user had the quest, but it was not so difficult for Sanghyuk, a veteran EL user, to find his way through the world of EL.

'I think it was somewhere around here...'

Having arrived at the Eastern Cliffs at the eastern end of the Land of Dusk, he used his unique mountaineering techniques to start looking for the path that leading to Wyvern's Nest.

If he had the prerequisite quest, then he would have skipped over this process and go directly to Wyvern's Nest, but it was perhaps too greedy for him to not suffer this much when he used his cheat known as reverse time travel.

Sanghyuk could find the path that leading to Wyvern's Nest after a few hours of searching. A vine that looked like it was from the story, Jack and the Beanstalk, which was cleverly hidden behind some of the cliffs, leading to Wyvern's Nest.

Wyvern's Nest could be considered a public dungeon. The main means of travel was through the vines that connected between the cliffs, and caution was necessary in order to not fall off to death.

Sanghyuk grabbed onto a vine and climbed up. When he climbed up for about 15 minutes, Wyvern's Nest, also known as the sky dungeon, appeared before his eyes.

"It's been a while."

Once, Sanghyuk had camped out in this place for whole four months. At that time, other users of the 'workshop' came and supplied the necessary items while they took away the loot, so he wasn't even allowed to climb down.

In those four months, Sanghyuk hunted countless wyverns. Wyverns were high-level monsters that required three users at around level 43~45 to work in a party to beat.

And not just any party, but a well-balanced one with a tanker, damage dealer, and a healer were a must. They were just that tough to beat.

However, there was also a positive side, and it was that the wyverns were very independent. They made nests on each of the peaks of the cliffs that were connected by vines, and the distance between each of those peaks was quite wide, so it was possible to hunt one at a time.

Sanghyuk first took out his Marking Book and marked this place. Once he entered Wyvern's Nest, the Marking Book won't work, so he had to do it here.

'Wyvern's Nest is actually rather complex, so most first-time users lost their ways. I also remember saying how shitty this dungeon was.'

While marking, Sanghyuk reminisced about his old memories. Actually, his past was too sad to be 'reminisced', but there were some things that he still missed.

'Wow, I thought I completely forgot, but I think I can remember the paths... looks like I did camp out here for a long time.'

At first, he was worried that he wouldn't be able to remember his way around anymore, but when he actually came, he was surprised to find out that he was worried for nothing.

‘Well, then. Let’s start hunting.’

Since he not only remembered the paths but the walkthrough as well, he had no need to wait for anything.

‘First up is a buff!’

Sanghyuk first took out a Fusion Card before the fight. The name of this Fusion Card that he had made by combining a few craft item cards and elemental cards... was ‘The Blessing of Wind and Fire’.

The effect of this card, made by combining the lowest-rank fire elemental card, lowest-rank wind elemental card and three other cheap materials, was the increase of basic attack power and speed.

It was one of the few buff-type Fusion Card that could be made from lowest-rank elementals, so he had made one hundred of them.

\*Tssssss.\*

The Fusion Card seeped into his body and the buff was activated. The number ‘30’ could be seen at the top right corner of his vision, and this was the duration of the buff.

30 meant 30 minutes.

‘Did I take about five minutes per wyvern with three people when we were completely proficient? Hmm, looks like I’ll have to set my first aim as ten minutes.’

Wyverns were monsters with great karma drop and item loot in compensation for the long time to hunt. Especially right now when he had no competition, he could move around various nests and hunt wyverns endlessly and profit immensely.

\*Chrrrrrrrrr, clack!\*

Sanghyuk took out his Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip and looked ahead of him. He could see a green wyvern in front of him... actually, green wyverns the weakest of wyverns, but they were still the strongest in the Land of Dusk.

“Let’s go!”

Having finished preparing, Sanghyuk started running on the vines that stretched out in front of him.



The most important thing when hunting a wyvern was to not let it take flight at all. And to do that, the eggs in the wyvern's nest, which there was always at least one of per nest, had to be hit during the fight.

In Sanghyuk's previous life, it was called the 'egg agro', and only by hitting the eggs users could prevent wyverns from using their wyvern breaths.

There was an interesting setting here, and it was that there was only one male in this wide dungeon. The rest were all females.

Normally, the damage dealer would take care of the egg agro instead of the tanker in a three-man party. Since the tanker had to take care of the wyvern's agro, it was hard for the tanker to take care of the egg agro at the same time.

So, the damage dealer would hit the egg once in awhile to prevent wyverns from taking flight.

If the wyverns could be tied down, then the rest was just the same as fighting other monsters, looking for patterns and counteracting against it.

There was nothing special to the wyvern's patterns. As long as users were careful of the melee attacks 'bite' and 'tail-strike', there was nothing difficult.

At first, Sanghyuk was also nervous because it had been a long time, but when it came to an actual battle, he easily adapted to the wyvern's patterns. The endless repetition of hunting these things in his previous life was etched into his memory, and they took effect.

Also, Sanghyuk's weapon, the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip, was very suitable to maintain egg agro. The nests of wyverns were mostly a circular space of 10m in diameter, so he could always hit the egg if he was near the center.

\*Chrrrr, clang!\*

Sanghyuk once again swung his Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip to hit the egg. The core of the egg agro was to not break the egg.

Once the egg was broken by mistake, the wyvern would go berserk. Even Sanghyuk wouldn't be able to endure against a berserk wyvern.

\*Kraaaaawr!\*

The female wyvern became fiercer the more Sanghyuk hit the egg. It was fighting to protect the egg even after its body was tattered.

'Tch, even monsters in games are like this...'

Sanghyuk was almost triggered after remembering the environment in his previous life. However, that didn't get in the way of his actions.

'Life must be lived alone anyway.'

After returning in time, Sanghyuk always thought that 'there are no people that aren't alone.'. That didn't change right now, so he swung the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip after getting his mind straight.

\*Swoosh, crunch!\*

He prevented the wyvern from taking flight by egg agro and mysteriously moved his whip continuously to wrap his whip around the wyvern's neck. Then, he pulled on the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip to get on the wyvern's back.

The fact that Sanghyuk got on the wyvern's back meant that it was time to kill the wyvern.

\*Kyaooooooooooh!\*

The wyvern struggled violently in order to take Sanghyuk off its body. However, Sanghyuk balanced himself like a cowboy doing rodeo and tightened the Ten Millennia Goldbone around the neck. Then he pulled on it hard.

\*Crrrrrrrrrunch!\*

The Ten Millennia Goldbone whip dug deep into the wyvern's neck. Sanghyuk grabbed



the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip with both hands and pulled on it again.

Since Sanghyuk had invested most of his additional stat points gained from leveling into strength and agility, his strength was considerably high.

So, when he decided to tighten the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip as much as possible, the already near-dead wyvern couldn't survive.

\*Crrrrack, thud.\*

In the end, the green wyvern's neck was bent into an L shape. The neck snapping meant that its HP had reached 0, so the wyvern collapsed onto the nest.

The moment the wyvern fell down, Sanghyuk first had a look at the remaining time on his buff.

'22 minutes... so I took around 8 minutes? It's better than I expected.'

Since he saved time from the original 10 minutes he was expecting, this wasn't a bad result. He had a lot of worries until he fought the wyvern itself, but when he actually fought, his experiences from his previous life helped him out a lot.

'I might be able to reduce it down to 5 minutes if I minimize some of my actions.'

He felt very good. He started remembering more of the memories of his previous life, including how to hunt wyverns in an easier way and what to look out for.

"Good! I should camp here for a while!"

Like how he sucked out the juice in the Snake Caves for one month, he was planning to suck the juice from here, Wyvern's Nest, as well.

He made proper adjustments and started hunting wyverns.

In his eyes, all the wyverns looked like loots.



"You want me to believe that?"

The man who was listening to Killing Machine's words, looked at him with an absurd expression.

"I can swear to God that it's real. How can I possibly lie to you, hyung?"

"Hmm..."

Killing Machine definitely couldn't lie to him. These two had met each other while non-stop PK'ing at another game around 5 years ago.

Of course, to the man who had a completely different level of talent than Killing Machine for PK'ing, Killing Machine was just an underling, but they had met up a few times in real life to drink during the past 5 years.

Killing Machine was actually worse in real life than in virtual reality, so he was always scolded by the man when they met up. If Killing Machine actually lied, then he might get beat up in real life.

"So you were actually defeated in 10 seconds flat?"

"Yes. He was really that absurd."

"So that's how it is..."

No matter how weak Killing Machine was, 10 seconds was too overkill. Even the man felt like he had to take 1 minute to subdue Killing Machine.

"I'm trying to search for him in secret, but it's hard to find his location. Should I call you as soon as I find him?"

What Killing Machine wanted was revenge. The man he had come to... had the greatest PvP abilities among the people he knew. Not only that, this man madly like to fight against strong people.

His name was Dark Dragon, aka DD. He was reputed to be one of the greatest PvP players in another game before EL.

"Goddammit, I tried to not become a malefactor for a while because I had a lot of things to do... I'm actually quite close on dark karma right now. I'll become a malefactor if I kill him, right?"

“Then you can subdue him and not kill him. I’ll do the killing.”

“Hey, do you think that EL’s crime system is so easy? Even if you kill him, my contribution to his death as a subdue is high so it won’t make much difference from me killing him.”

“Hmm... then how about you lower your dark karma as much as possible while I look for him?”

“So it’s that after all...? Okay, I get it so go look for him. And you idiot, I told you to stay low and hunt since malefactors won’t be able to act for a while. You were put in such a state because you didn’t listen to me and PK’ed as you wished. If you can’t judge for yourself, then at least listen to other people’s words.”

“No, I was just...”

Killing Machine became infinitely small in front of DD.

Killing Machine became a malefactor on his own precisely because he wanted to stay apart from him, but he could only resort to DD for his revenge.

# Chapter 28

## Green Wyvern Lord (1)

While Killing Machine was looking hard for Sanghyuk, Sanghyuk was massacring hard the wyverns in Wyvern's Nest.

Since he had perfect theoretical knowledge of hunting wyverns, he made that knowledge his as soon as he put it into practice. As a result, Sanghyuk could massacre wyverns very fast.

4 minutes – that was the time he needed to kill one wyvern. By killing one wyvern every 4 minutes, he could wipe out the 27 wyvern's nests in nearly 2 hours.

Wyverns had a respawn time of 20 minutes so Sanghyuk could hunt endlessly.

Wyverns not only dropped a large quantity of karma, but they also dropped high-quality craft items.

Wyvern's skin, claws, and teeth almost always dropped, and they were of the highest grade among the items that could be traded right now, and although this had a low probability, wyvern's heart was something that Sanghyuk really needed.

There were other useful item loots as well, so wyverns were like treasure chests to Sanghyuk.

Even Sanghyuk couldn't predict when other users could approach this place. So, he thought that he had to hunt as many wyverns as possible while he still monopolized this place.

In the end, Sanghyuk even decreased his sleep time to focus on hunting wyverns. Every minute and second was a waste to him so, he never thought about anything else.

Half a month passed by in a flash. Sanghyuk hunted more wyverns than snakes at Snake Caves, and the results were satisfactory. His level was now 44, and he had many high-priced items in his warehouse.

Considering how the highest known level in EL was 43 at this time, Sanghyuk was leveling up at an unbelievable speed. Everything was satisfactory, but there was one thing... just one thing that touched Sanghyuk's nerves.

It was... the only male and the named monster of Wyvern's Nest, the 'Green Wyvern Lord'.

'There's a method to lure the Wyvern Lord... but I can't remember it.'

Sanghyuk camped out for four months in Wyvern's Nest in his previous life, but at the time, other people took care of luring out the Wyvern Lord. Sanghyuk only participated in the hunt for it when they lured it out.

Since that was the case, he knew how to hunt the Wyvern Lord, but didn't know how to lure it out.

'One thing I can be sure of is that they used the egg. But I don't know what they did next.'

If Sanghyuk cleared the quest and came here through the normal route, he would have gotten the quest to hunt the Wyvern Lord. And through that quest, he would naturally find out how to call out the Wyvern Lord easily.

However, Sanghyuk was someone from the future who relied on his knowledge to come to this place, so he was far away from any quests.

Sanghyuk pondered a lot while fighting wyverns but he couldn't remember the method. Named monsters like the Green Wyvern Lord who only appeared after certain requirements were met were typically called the conditional named monsters, and killing these named monsters resulted in additional bonus effects.

Hunting the Wyvern Lord successfully would result in all users that participated in the battle receiving a 16 hour-long buff called the 'Wyvern Lord's Grandeur' separate from the loot.

The effects of this buff not only increased the amount of loot from wyverns, but it also increased the chances of higher grade loot items as well.

Simply put, the efficiency of hunting wyverns would double once the Wyvern Lord was killed.

‘I need to kill the Lord to suck out the true juice...’

He was largely disappointed, but he could only hunt like that until he remembered.



Sanghyuk headed to Falcon City since his expensive spatial expansion bag was full. Right now, Falcon City was full of users everywhere.

It was true that the Land of Dusk was larger than many world maps from other games, and that Falcon City was an incredibly large city, but it was becoming harder and harder to harbor all of the explosive influx of users to EL.

Of course, crowded places were managed by creating different channels of the same place to divide up the users, so it wasn’t much of a problem yet, but at this rate, the hunting fields would become insufficient.

In fact, the Snake Caves were being fought over by over five large-scale guilds, and hunting fields similar to the Snake Caves were in a similar situation.

‘Who was the guild that first broke through the Cave of Giants again? Was it a party and not a team? I can’t remember this one.’

He didn’t remember who broke through first, but he knew when they did.

‘In exactly four months, when the Land of Dusk reaches its saturated state, the first passers of the Cave of Giants would appear. Only when many highest-ranking users pass through after that does the walkthrough of the caves starts spreading among other users.

Once the users escaped the Land of Dusk, there were enormous continents that couldn’t be described as just ‘wide’.

Once the Hellfire Desert, Heroic Lands, and the Solar Continent appeared, the word ‘saturation’ would never appear again. In fact, problems would rise because the playfield was too wide.

‘Four months... Fine! I’ll escape the Land of Dusk in two months then!’

Originally, Sanghyuk’s objective was to break through the Cave of Giants around one

month earlier than the other users. However, things went well, and he raised his character much faster than he expected, so he pulled his schedule forward by one month.

As always, Sanghyuk cleared up his items while alternating between the commissioned sales store and the auction.

He sold what he needed to, and bought what he needed to.

Since he hunted a lot in Wyvern's Nest, he had a lot to sell as well as a lot to buy. Like how he was practically the exclusive seller of the steel scales, he raised the market price of wyvern's skin, claws, and teeth by exclusively selling them.

Practically Sanghyuk was the only one that sold those items, so the ones who needed those items could only buy them at that price no matter how expensive they were.

In his warehouse, he still had a lot of skin, claws, and teeth, but he never released them into the market in one go. It was the so-called 'premium sales' strategy, and there were wimps wherever people went, so the skin and the claws sold out very well.

'I should be able to monopolize it for another month I think.'

He wished to monopolize it until he left the Land of Dusk, but there was no way the other users would stay still. Perhaps some users may have come close to doing the prerequisite quest to finding Wyvern's Nest.

Sanghyuk predicted that other users would come to Wyvern's Nest in around one more month.

'That's why I need to kill the Lord as soon as possible... '

After looking around the commissioned sales store and the auction, Sanghyuk bought a few consumable items and opened the Marking Book. Then, he put a lowest-rank mana stone on the rune of the Marking Book to activate it.

\*Paaaah!\*

At that moment, the recall magic stored in the Marking Book activated and enveloped Sanghyuk, and Sanghyuk could soon move to the entrance of Wyvern's Nest, which he had marked before.

Mana stones were expensive consumables, but recall magic was so comfortable that it was hard to give up on it.

And honestly, using mana stones to go to a place instantly was much more worth it than going there by foot if the distance was large.

‘Well, then, should I start again?’

Hunting the same monsters in the same field was honestly a boring thing. Gamers called this ‘grinding’, and Sanghyuk was used to grinding.

Honestly, what he did in the ‘workshop’ couldn’t simply be called ‘grinding’ anymore.

“Ah! That’s it! Orc blood came before the egg!

Having hunted for a few days in the Wyvern’s Nest, Sanghyuk finally remembered the summoning method of the Wyvern Lord that was fuzzy in his head.

‘I was stupid to forget about orc blood. It was only after that the egg came... ’

As a setting, orcs were the monsters that wyverns liked the most.

‘First, I need to hunt the wyvern in the central nest and scatter orc blood on it. Did that call out the Lord’s cry? In any case, something would happen once that happened, and breaking the egg would make the Wyvern Lord come down from the sky. That’s it! Now I remember it properly.’

Sanghyuk felt refreshed as though a clot in his toilet was just broken through. It really annoyed him since the memory was fuzzy, but he felt like he could live now.

‘Looks like I should get orc blood first.’

Orc blood was a craft item that dropped at a low chance when hunting orcs. It could be called rare, but it wasn’t such an expensive craft item, and he could probably buy them off the auction.

Sanghyuk immediately returned to Falcon City to get some orc blood. Having bought quite a lot of orc blood, Sanghyuk quickly moved to the central nest where the Wyvern Lord would come and hunted the female wyvern there quickly.



When that wyvern disappeared, there was only the egg remaining. Sanghyuk checked to see if he was missing anything before the hunt and scattered orc blood onto the empty nest.

\*Splash\*

He waited for the sign after scattering the blood on the nest. And after some time passed the signs he was waiting for finally started.

\*Caaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawwwwwwww! Grrr, Grrrrk!\*

The grand wyvern cries spread resounded across the entirety of Wyvern's Nest. At that moment, Sanghyuk immediately noticed that this was the cry of the Wyvern Lord.

'So the cry was the sign after all.'

\*Fwoooooosh, crack!\*

As soon as he heard the cry, Sanghyuk broke the bloodied egg.

\*Roaaaaaaaaaaaaaar!\*

At that moment, the cry resounded more violently. Then, a black dot rapidly descended from the sky.

A gigantic green wyvern that was three times bigger than a female wyvern... the Wyvern Lord finally showed itself in front of Sanghyuk.

All requirements have been fulfilled. The rare quest 'Wyvern Lord's Wrath' is activated.

He even got an unexpected rare quest, but Sanghyuk was currently focused on the Wyvern Lord, so he didn't put much thought to it.

'I only need to remember one thing when battling with the Wyvern Lord. Don't drop! That's all of it!'

Sanghyuk had hunted numerous Wyvern Lord in his previous life. Of course, he didn't

hunt them alone, but with another 4 members, but it was true that he had a lot of experience.

And through those experiences, he knew what was the most important when hunting the Wyvern Lord.

‘The first phase is the aerial fight!’

\*Kaoooooooooh!\*

The Green Wyvern Lord took a deep breath as soon as he appeared within Sanghyuk’s field of vision. This was a pre-movement for a breath attack, and users standing on the nest would be obliterated within seconds.

There was only one method to dodge this attack. It was to get on the Green Wyvern Lord’s back!

\*Tap-tap-tap, pa-pah!\*

Sanghyuk, who was already prepared, immediately stepped on a few protruding rocks at the perimeter of the nest and jumped up towards the Wyvern Lord. Actually, these rocks were put here precisely for that purpose.

In his previous life, countless users died to find this method, but Sanghyuk could easily enter the first phase thanks to their sacrifices.

# Chapter 29

## Green Wyvern Lord (2)

\*Tap-tap, chrrrrrrr!\*

As soon as Sanghyuk got on top of the Green Wyvern Lord, he wrapped the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip around its neck.

In his previous life, the usual guide was to stab into the back to hold or hold onto the wings, but right now, he didn't need to go with such a difficult method.

\*Kyaoooooooooooooh!\*

The Green Wyvern Lord shot up to the skies as soon as Sanghyuk got on its back. From now on, Sanghyuk had to endure 15 minutes on its back without falling off.

Once he fell, it was over. The entire first phase was to tire it out by enduring.

\*Fwoooooosh, bbbboom!\*

It tried to shake Sanghyuk off by flying around violently in midair. However, Sanghyuk was latched onto its back with the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip in both his hands.

'I'll definitely not fall off!'

The Green Wyvern Lord tried to shake him off while Sanghyuk tried to latch on. Their intense aerial battle started now.

Having shot up to the skies, the Green Wyvern Lord did all sorts of things in order to shake Sanghyuk off its back. However, Sanghyuk had already experienced this numerous times in his previous life, so he got through the first phase too easily.

When it tried to descend vertically with its back against a cliff, he rapidly moved onto its belly to avoid the crisis, and when it tried to shake its body, Sanghyuk latched onto its back tightly and held onto his balance.

Not only that, but Sanghyuk also dealt some additional damage by using a dagger he had prepared beforehand. Shaving off the boss's health in its first phase helped a lot in the second phase.

In the end, Sanghyuk latched onto the Green Wyvern Lord's back even after 15 minutes had passed.

The wyvern, which went crazy for fifteen minutes, powerlessly landed down. To be exact, the monster would become like that due to its programmed state, but in any case, it landed on its nest with half of its health and stamina shaved off.

The damage Sanghyuk had shaved off was counted separately, so its HP was nearly at 40%

It landed on the nest, but Sanghyuk did not get off its back. In the case of his previous life, everyone naturally disembarked the boss's back and fought in a formation. This was how it was conquered at the beginning.

However, as time passed, a more efficient walkthrough was made, and it was to stay on the Wyvern Lord's back in the ground fight even after the aerial fight. Of course, there was one fundamental problem with this method.

\*shshshshshshshshshuk!\*

Palm-sized wyvern parasites crawled up the Wyvern Lord's body. These were insect-type monsters that possessed the ability to 'drain', and there were hundreds of them.

This was the problem.

Honestly, they weren't anything great by themselves. However, amount of them changed the story. Hundreds of parasites were just as difficult to fight as the Wyvern Lord itself. What was fortunate was that these parasites only stayed on the Wyvern Lord's body.

This was why the users naturally got off the boss's back and fought it on the ground.

'But a new walkthrough made its appearance after the parasites' fatal weakness was revealed.'

Sanghyuk raised his right hand after seeing the parasites that crawled up the Wyvern

Lord's back.

He already knew that things would go like this, and had prepared himself. Sanghyuk's preparation was... This-

Fusion Card skill 'Iceplate'!

\*Pop, kish-kish-kish-kish-kish-kish!\*

Sanghyuk threw a Fusion Card underneath his foot. Then, a circular ice platform around 4m diameter was created. And surprisingly, the parasites couldn't come up to the ice platform.

This card could be made from lowest-rank ice elemental card, ice essence, and two other cheap craft item cards, and this was a Fusion Card that had the cost value of '1' and not 0.

Normally, higher cost meant greater power.

Currently, Sanghyuk could possess up to 50 in cost value. For example, if he only used the iceplate card, then he could possess up to 50 iceplate cards.

Fusion Cards had to be made in concentration, so the creation of them took a long time. Especially in the case of higher cost cards.

It was also impossible to make Fusion Cards during battle as it was disallowed by the system itself. As such, cost limit was a very important indicator for Card Users.

There was this kind of penalty to compensate for not using HP or MP and other important values.

Of course, the cost limit would increase as Sanghyuk's level rose, and it could also be raised through items, so he didn't need to be worried that his current cost limit was low.

In any case, Sanghyuk had made plenty of iceplate cards, 10 of them. The duration of iceplates were 5 minutes each. During these five minutes, the parasites would not be able to invade the ice.

‘Ice aura! This is the fatal weakness of the parasites!’

Having blocked the approach of parasites, Sanghyuk pulled on the Ten Millennia Goldbone whip around the Wyvern Lord’s neck and expressed his intention that he was not planning to get off.

Thanks to that, the Green Wyvern Lord was put in even more dire straits. Originally, Sanghyuk was supposed to get off its back for it to display its full prowess.

However, Sanghyuk bullied the Green Wyvern Lord in the most efficient and quickest way as though he had just found a shortcut.

Since he knew all of the boss’s weak points and aimed for all of them, the Green Wyvern Lord couldn’t hold no matter how strong of a monster it was.

Sanghyuk kept attacking from the boss’s back, and eventually, the boss’s health fell below 10%. And at that moment, it started shaking before emitting a strong poison from all over its body.

\*Pssssssshhh.\*

This skill was releasing the poisonous blood in its body so it could be considered a suicide attack.

This was the third phase.

The guide through the third phase was simple. Users had to just run like crazy.

\*Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap\*, Sanghyuk was already running away at full speed as soon as he found out that the Green Wyvern Lord was shivering.

The range of Green Wyvern Lord’s self-detonation was the entirety of the nest, so he had to escape the nest at all costs.

\*Brrrrrr, bbbbbbbooom!\*

Eventually, the Green Wyvern Lord’s body exploded, and along with that, fatal poisonous blood scattered across the surroundings.

“Uaaaaah!”

At the same time of the explosion, Sanghyuk threw his body off the boss's nest. Of course, at this rate, he would fall to his death even if he doesn't get killed by the poison.

\*Chrrrrrr!\*

Sanghyuk wasn't going to commit suicide, so he twisted his body around before extending the Ten Millennia Goldbone Whip to the nest.

\*Fwooooosh, clack!\*

Fortunately, Ten Millennia Goldbone whip had a stronger adhesive strength (?) than spider webs and wrapped around a rocky protrusion above the nest.

\*Bbbbbboooooom!\*

Sanghyuk watched as poisonous blood scattered above him from below the nest. In his previous life, he had to borrow power from mages in order to dodge this, but there were no mages with him right now, so he could only do this.

You have defeated the conditional Field Named monster 'Green Wyvern Lord'.

You have hunted the first wyvern-class named monster and achieved something that no Dimensional Traveler has yet to do. This will become your achievement and be eternally remembered.

You have acquired the unique-grade title [First Wyvern Lord Hunter].

You have defeated the first Green Wyvern Lord, and have received all 42 items that could be gotten from the Wyvern Lord due to the first kill bonus.

Congratulations. The gathered karma has broken through the limit and you have leveled up.

As a bonus for clearing the Green Wyvern Lord, the 'Wyvern Lord's Grandeur' buff will be given.

You have cleared the rare quest 'Wyvern Lord's Wrath'. As a reward, you have acquired 'Emerald Ring'.

“Yes!”

Sanghyuk gripped his fist while still hanging down the cliff.

Actually, even Sanghyuk was not confident about hunting the Green Wyvern Lord. It was a monster that was usually hunted by at least 5 users with each one at level 44 or higher.

Since he was hunting such a thing by himself, he had a high probability of failing if he made the slightest mistake.

When the poisonous mist dissipated slightly, Sanghyuk carefully climbed up to the Green Wyvern Lord’s nest. This nest only appeared when the Green Wyvern Lord appeared so it would disappear in one hour.

He didn’t even check what the Green Wyvern Lord dropped and swiped them all into his spatial expansion bag. Then, he climbed down using the vines.

Having climbed down, Sanghyuk first checked the title he had gotten.

Title – ‘First Wyvern Lord Hunter’

Grade – Unique

Description – You have defeated the Wyvern Lord earlier than anyone and etched your existence.

Effects – [Prefix: Increased resistance to poison] [Postfix: Decreased fall damage]  
[Constant effect: >Hot blooded(A) : All abilities increase by 5% when fighting against reptilian monsters.<]

‘Oho, reptiles! This will be useful.’

A considerable fraction of monsters was reptile-class. Wyverns naturally being one of them, and even the strongest monsters, dragons, were one of them as well.

So this title was very useful.



‘Let’s check the items later and hunt first.’

The special buff ‘Wyvern Lord’s Grandeur’ was a buff that lasted 16 hours. Since the Wyvern Lord respawned every 48 hours, he had to focus on hunting the wyverns while his buff still lasted.

Through the buff, Sanghyuk started sucking twice as much juice as before. He was raising his character at a superspeed that no other users could dare follow.



Other than an hour of rest midway through the battle, Sanghyuk did not stop hunting for 16 hours. After that, he came back to Falcon City and logged out.

Then, he logged in after plenty of sleep.

Since he was too tired, he logged out without organizing any of the items, so the first thing he had to do was to dispose of the items that were piled up in his spatial expansion bag.

However, Sanghyuk discovered something that he didn’t expect at all while he was organizing the items.

“Whoa... this is...”

A long, red crystal was in his hand.

This was no ordinary item.

‘Sanguine Knowledge, why is this... oh! It’s from the Wyvern Lord?’

Sanguine Knowledge, from a wider perspective, it was a category of Ancient Knowledge. However, unlike the other Ancient Knowledge, it engraved its unique powers through the means of ‘blood’.

The succession of blood was something different than absorbing an Ancient Knowledge into the soul. If Ancient Knowledge was a kind of ‘job class’ for the users, Sanguine Knowledge could be considered the ‘race’ for the users.

‘In my previous life, I never acquired one even after hunting so many Green Wyvern

Lords... ’

Sanghyuk nodded his head after checking the item once again.

‘Wyvern Blood... To think I’d get my hands on it at this time.’

Sanghyuk looked down at the Wyvern Blood with a stumped expression. However, at that moment, the Wyvern Blood reacted to Sanghyuk’s empty Soul Hole.

Your preparations to succeed the Wyvern Blood has been finished.

You may acquire strong power by succeeding the Sanguine Knowledge ‘Wyvern Blood’.

Will you absorb the Sanguine Knowledge ‘Wyvern Blood’ into your fourth Soul Hole?  
Please decide within 5 minutes.

Sanghyuk shook his head without hesitation when that message appeared.

“I will not absorb.”

His answer was firm. He looked down at the crystal without any regrets.



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